

EDMONTON'S 100% INDEPENDENT NEWS & ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

#679 / OCT 23 - 29, 2008
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VUEWEEKLY

GOOD ENOUGH AFTER ALL



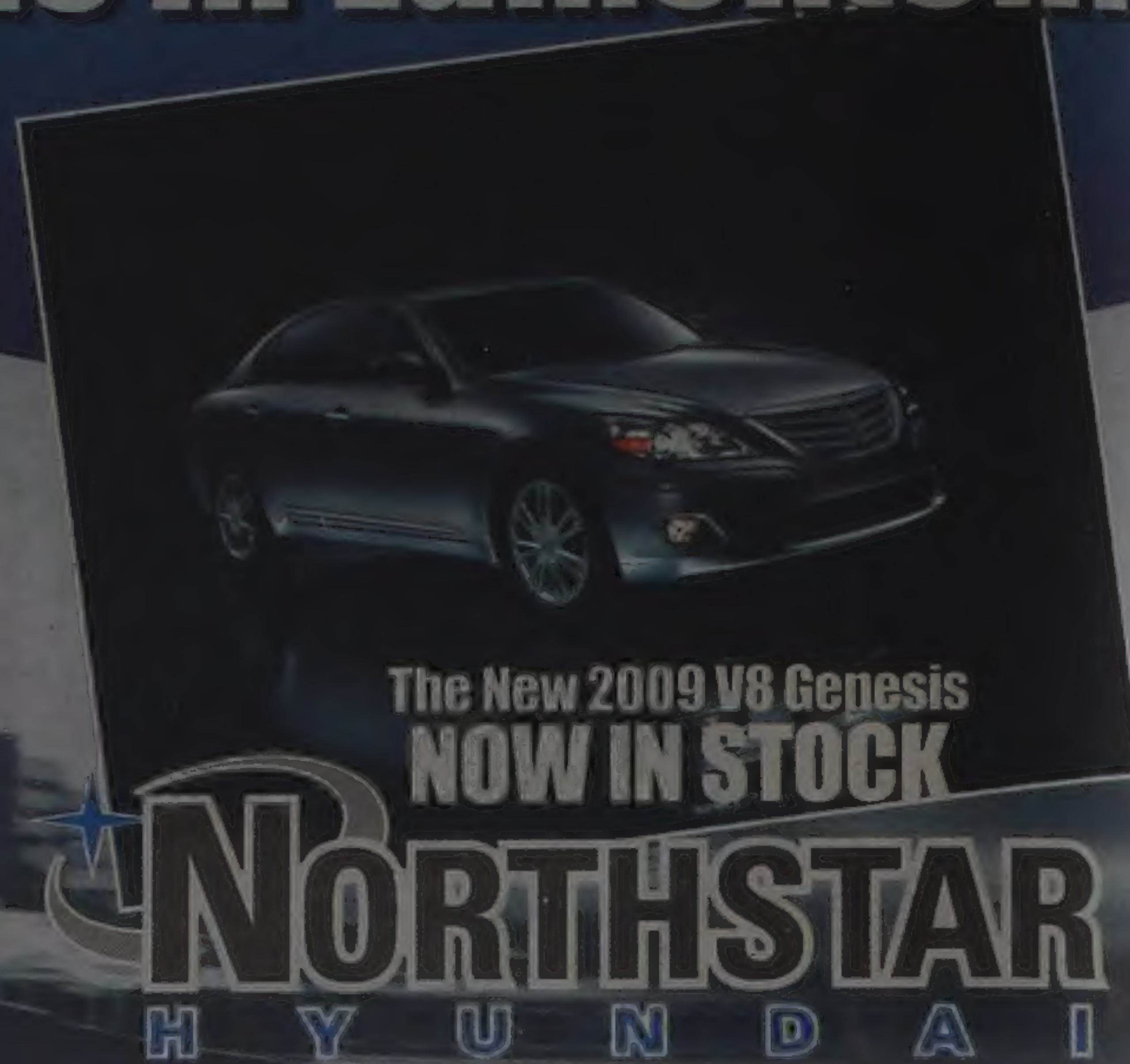
CHRIS EATON'S CRACKED
VIEW HELPS ROCK PLAZA
CENTRAL SMILE THROUGH
THE BAD TIMES

[DAVID BERRY / W]

FRONT: SELLING GOLD BAR / 10 ARTS: BILLY TWINKLE / 21 FILM: DEADMONTON / 27

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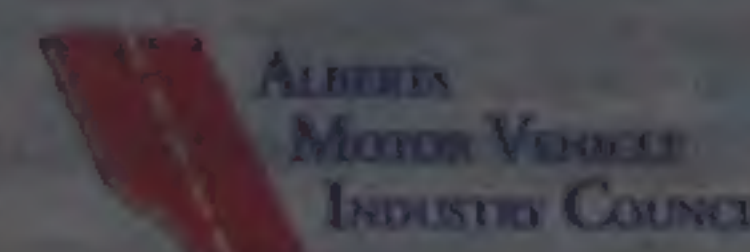
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ROCK PLAZA CENTRAL 31

Chris Eaton on what it means to have obsessive fans, why he likes the apocalypse and why the world is good enough after all.

FRONT



THE GREEN SHAFT 7

SNOW



NEMESIS RUNS 12

DISH



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BILLY TWINKLE 21

FILM



DEADMONTON 27

MUSIC



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Chris Wattie

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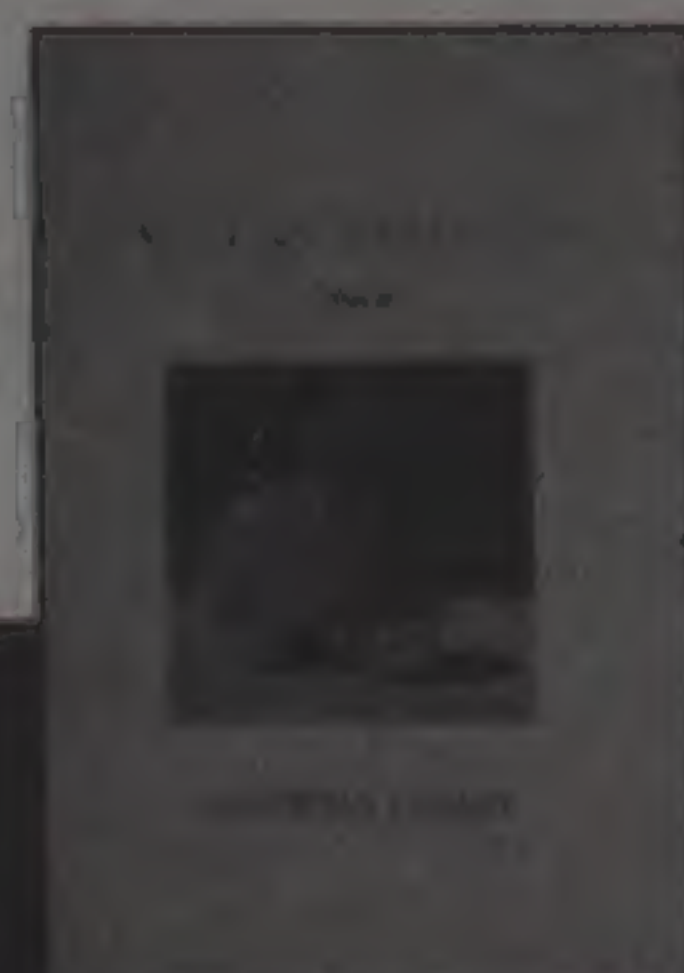
(Northern Alberta Amputee Program)

Monday, Oct. 27 at 7:30 pm
at the TransAlta Arts Barns 10330 84 Ave

Shawna Lemay

Join local poet Shawna Lemay for the launch of her latest book, *Calm Things: Essays*.

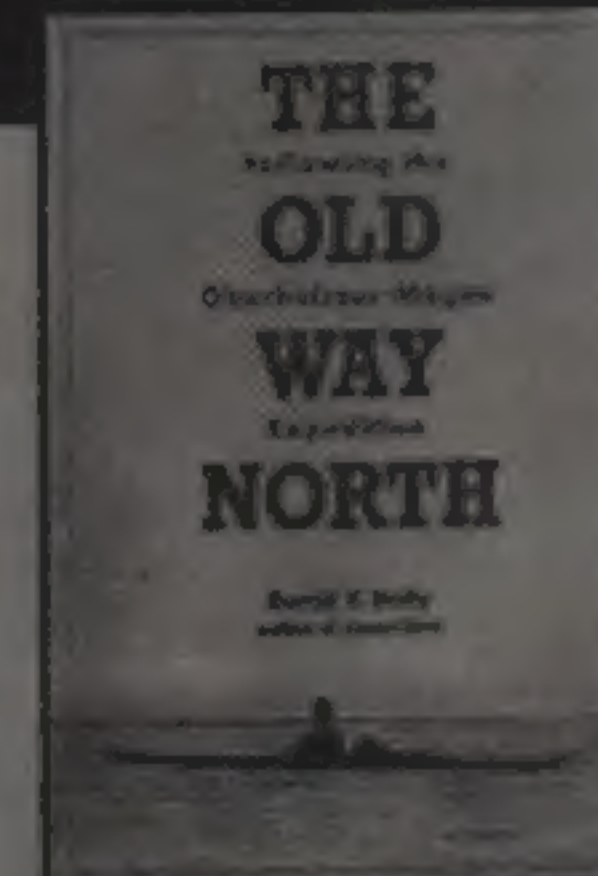
Tuesday, Oct. 28 at 7:30 pm



David F. Pelly

Join avid canoeist and conservation writer David F. Pelly for the Edmonton launch of *The Old Way North*, an exploration of the Oberholtzer-Magee expedition in upper Manitoba.

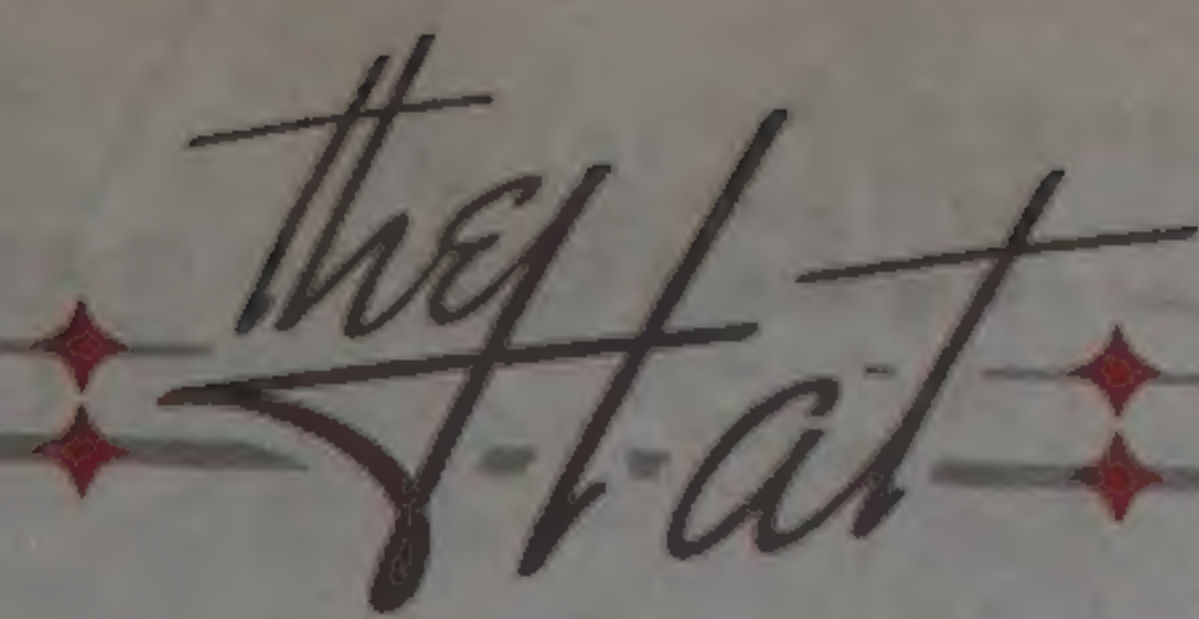
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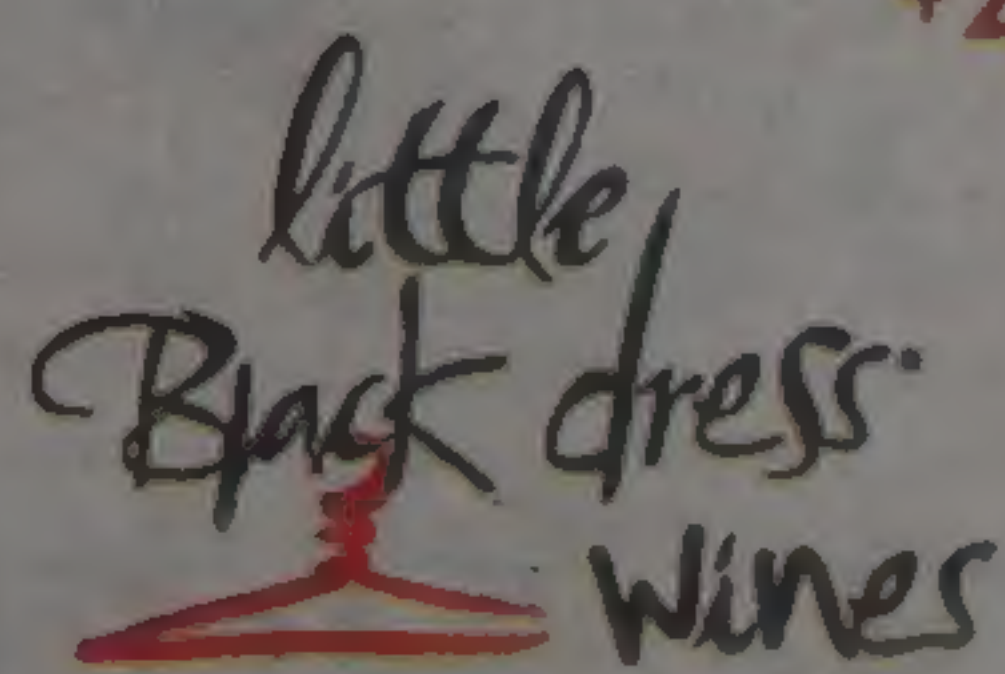
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Stop the pipeline

SCOTT HARRIS / scott@vueweekly.com

Even by the standards of Canada's abysmal treatment of First Nations peoples, the situation faced by the Lubicon Lake Indian Nation of northern Alberta is an embarrassing blight on our national reputation.

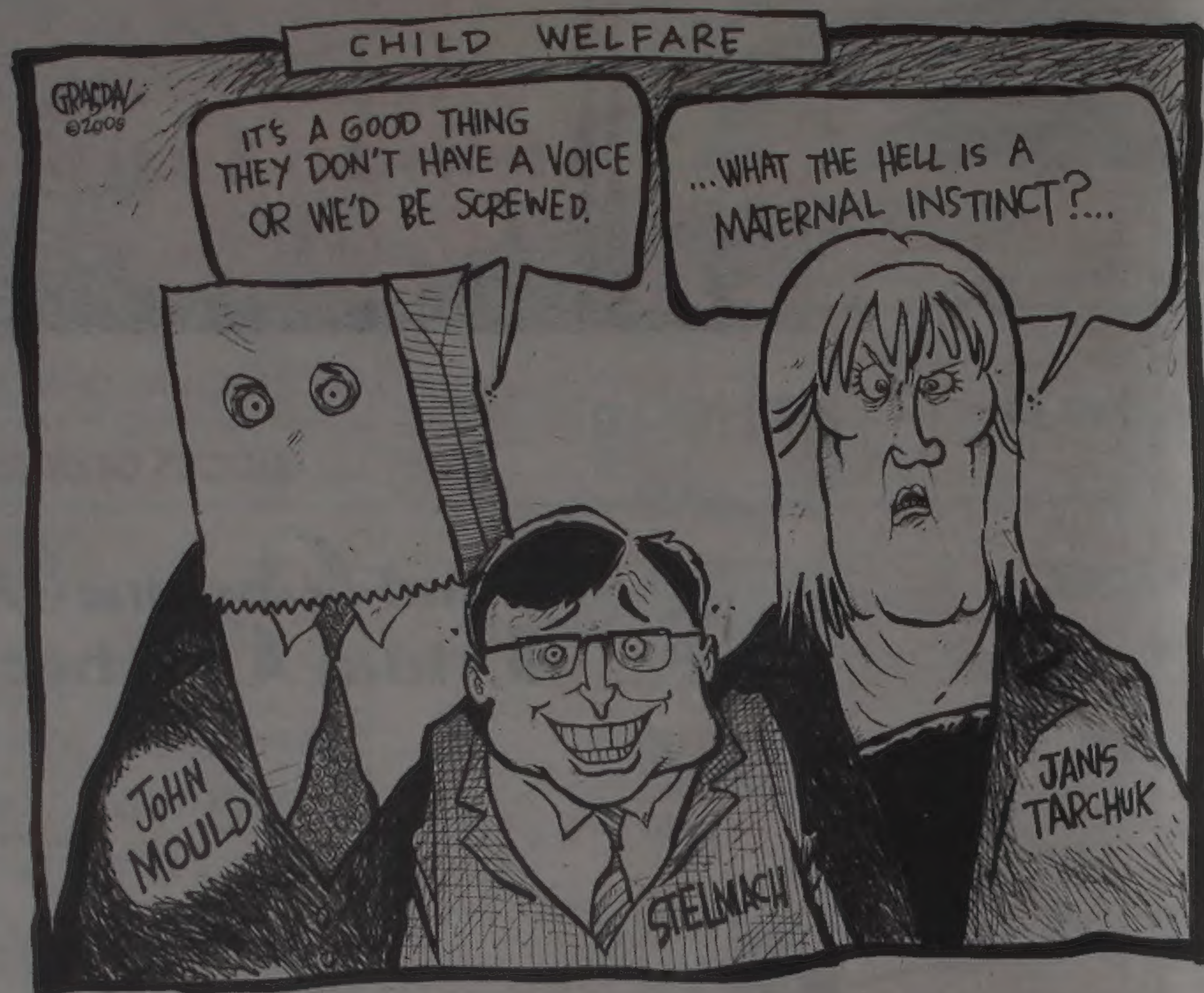
The small nation was overlooked during treaty negotiations with the federal government in the 1880s, and as a result the Lubicon Cree have never ceded any rights over their traditional territory. Despite this fact, the Lubicon have suffered an onslaught of oil and gas development since the provincial government first opened an all-weather road into their territory in 1979. The Lubicon's traditional economy centred around hunting and trapping has been devastated by over 2000 oil and gas wells which now dot their land—extracting billions of dollars in resources, from which the Lubicon receive no benefits.

Despite promises of recognition, five rounds of negotiations—the last of which broke down in 2003—have failed to reach a negotiated settlement. The United Nations Human Rights Commission has twice urged the Canadian government to reach a settlement with the Lubicon, and in 2005 the body called on the federal government to ensure the Lubicon are consulted “before granting licences for economic exploitation of the disputed land.”

The latest threat is TransCanada Pipelines' plan for a jumbo pipeline through Lubicon territory, which received approval October 10 from the Alberta Utilities Commission. The Lubicon—along with Amnesty International—is demanding that construction be halted until TransCanada has fully consulted with the nation and their land rights are recognized.

In the legislature last week, both opposition parties called on the government to suspend construction of the pipeline, but Minister of Aboriginal Relations Gene Zwozdesky rejected such calls, saying it is a federal responsibility to negotiate with the Lubicon. TransCanada, for its part, says it has already had a series of meetings with the Lubicon and that they plan to begin construction later this year. Once again for the Lubicon, responsibility is shuffled around while development proceeds.

It's time for Canadians and Albertans to demand action to resolve this shameful situation, and putting a stop to this pipeline until that happens might finally bring an end to our long-broken promises to the Lubicon. ▀



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MAIL LETTERS

IF I HAD A MILLION DOLLARS

Regarding the article by Connie Howard ("Who's skeptical of the skeptics?," Oct 2 - Oct 8, 2008), I would ask that she present me with one "alternative" medical modality which I have labelled as false, but which has actual, hard, scientific evidence to support it. Ms Howard may be eligible for the million-dollar prize offered by my Foundation, and as Bogart said, "... I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship."

JAMES RANDI

JAMES RANDI EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

ANOTHER THEORETICAL LETTER

Dean Kemp ("Re: Your Theory About Theories," Letters, Oct 2 - Oct 8, 2008) has no problem believing that through "parallel evolution" species evolve virtually identically on different continents over millions of years through essentially no other mechanisms than natural selection and genetics. To me this is just absurd and I don't believe it.

I see the debate is highly polarized, "you're either for us or you're agin' us." If you criticize Darwinism, you are irrational, and if you embrace Darwinism then (as I see it) life has no real meaning, because evolution exists because of natural selec-

tion which depends on chance mutation. I find "life has no meaning" also an absurd position which I don't believe.

Researching this letter I fortunately discovered Buddhist writers looking at the evolution/creationism debate from a perspective that avoids the polarization existing between the fundamentalist Christians and the fundamentalist Darwinists.

Many writers have pointed out that Buddhism, which points to the interrelatedness of all beings and all phenomena, is consistent with ecology and quantum theory. This interrelatedness also points to a view in which evolution is not therefore primarily about survival of the fittest, but rather about beings expressing an emerging purpose, not one ordained by an external god, but simply by their emerging nature. This notion of interrelatedness also points to a value position more amenable than survival of the fittest to our continuing survival as a species. It's worth considering.

MICHAEL CENKNER

THINK OF THE CHILDREN!

Thank you so much for your excellent summary of party stands on issues ("Pick your poison," Oct 9 - Oct 15, 2008). It is extremely useful and well researched.

As a longtime advocate for women's and children's rights, I have joined the pleas of many groups to each party to value caregiving. We want government to provide funding to recognize the importance of care of the young, sick,

handicapped, elderly and dying and to make sure that those who do this work are seen as vital to the economy.

The childcare summary you gave, mercifully recognized that care of children happens wherever there is a child. Daycare advocacy groups have in the past tried to have government believe that a child outside their facility did not get childcare at all, or was not going to engage in any learning.

This election I am thrilled to see that all parties care about the caregiving issue. We who prioritize the family side of career-family balance finally see attention paid to home-based care of the elderly, to the work of parents of kids with autism or other major health challenges. There is much to be done of course. Most parties still treat this care role as something to be earned by doing paid work and "forgiven" rather than something to be valued for itself.

But we're headed the right way finally. It's about equality of all parenting styles, equal benefit of all children, and about valuing all roles of women—paid or unpaid.

BEVERLEY SMITH

Vue Weekly welcomes reader response, whether critical or complimentary. Send your opinion by mail (Vue Weekly, 10303 - 108 Street, Edmonton AB T5J 1L7), by fax (780.426.2889) or by email (letters@vueweekly.com). Preference is given to feedback about articles in Vue Weekly. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity.

The green shaft

After the election, what's next for action on climate change?

SCOTT HARRIS / scott@vnewweekly.com

On December 2, 2006, a smiling Stéphane Dion, surrounded by supporters clad in his signature green scarves, gave his victory speech to a boisterous Liberal crowd gathered in Montréal's Palais des congrès.

While Dion's victory in the Liberal leadership race was a come-from-behind surprise, his credentials as minister of the environment and his success as chair of the Montréal UN Climate Change summit a year earlier made him the ideal candidate to fight an anticipated election which by all accounts was to focus on the environment as the key issue.

Across the country, opinion polls put the environment, and specifically the problem of climate change, as the top concern of Canadians, who finally seemed ready to embrace policies that would reverse the country's steadily rising greenhouse gas emissions.

Less than two years later, voters returned the Conservatives—the party with the weakest environmental stance of any major political party—to a strengthened minority government, and Dion this week announced his resignation as leader of a devastated Liberal party which had its worst showing since Confederation.

So, what now for Canadian action on climate change?

"I think in Canada ... it's going to be interesting," offers Kevin Grandia, the co-founder of vote4environment.ca, a



NEWS | ENVIRONNEMENT

website which during the election encouraged Canadians to vote strategically to prevent a second Harper government. "Right now, Harper has come out of the election and Canadians sent a clear message—whether they wanted to send this message or not—that the environment and global warming wasn't a number one issue and a priority to them. That's the message they sent by not demanding that environment and global warming be a ballot box issue."

Grandia says that the failure of Dion to sell his Green Shift plank—which would have shifted taxes from "goods" like income to "bads" like carbon emissions—will also likely mean politicians of all stripes will be hesitant to introduce a meaningful price on carbon, which environmentalists and econo-

mists agree is necessary to achieve the emissions cuts required anytime soon.

"There's also a dangerous message that's been sent to Ottawa, in that a carbon tax and cap-and-trade are political liabilities, so that's another big problem," Grandia explains, saying Conservative attacks of the plan clouded the issue.

"The first thing people need to do is take a look at the actions of Stephen Harper during this election. His comments were baseless on things like the carbon tax causing the ruin of our economy," Grandia says. "The plan makes sense, but the Liberals were outmatched on what the Green Shift policy would be. They didn't come out aggressively enough from the beginning and they didn't hit back hard enough on the framing of it as a carbon tax or the message that it was going to ruin the economy."

While Dion's plan suffered from

such Conservative messaging, Grandia says attacks from the left didn't help either.

"I think the NDP were also completely dishonest on that issue. They said that a carbon tax would hurt families, but that a cap-and-trade program would somehow not. Well, the bottom line is a carbon tax isn't going to hurt families and I'm sure Jack Layton understands that. So I think the NDP were not helpful on selling climate solutions, because they actively confused the issue."

WHILE CLARE DEMERSE, a policy analyst with the Pembina Institute's climate change program, shares Grandia's frustration with the "misinformation" of the election dialogue, she says the urgency of climate change means attention needs to move to pressuring the Conservative government on the issue.

"What I'm thinking about now is the need to make sure that our government does what we need for climate change," she says. "We're in the middle of a negotiation on the next phase of Kyoto, which is going to wrap up in December of 2009, so it's quite likely that our current prime minister will be the one leading us into that negotiation. So this government has a really crucial role to play."

"Nobody would tell you the Conservative Party had the strongest platform out of the party platforms—they clearly didn't," she continues. "But given that they are the ones that are going to be taking us into these negotiations we have to make sure that they strengthen their climate policies in a few key areas: in terms of climate targets, climate policies, oil sands, renewables, efficiencies—all the key files so that Canada doesn't get left behind."

While it's a tall order for a government sorely lacking in green creden-

tials, Demerse says there are sources of pressure that could move the Harper government to more meaningful action. In addition to international pressure on Canada, she says a number of provinces are beginning to take action on climate change—most notably BC with its own carbon tax—and domestic businesses are starting to demand more clarity on emissions policies. She also says the looming US election could motivate more Canadian action.

"Both of the leaders, whether it's President Obama or President McCain, have pledged to do a lot more than George Bush did, so we're in a position where Canada could be very quickly left behind by the United States."

Grandia is less sanguine about what he expects of the Harper government.

"I think you're going to see us continue to be the embarrassing laggard internationally on this issue. We're going to be left on the international stage as the holdout. I think that's pretty clear."

While Grandia recognizes that dealing with the global economic turmoil has become the number one issue for the government, he points to the response of the UK's new Energy and Climate Change Secretary Ed Miliband, who in the face of the crisis has pledged to deepen emissions cuts to 80 per cent below 1990 levels by 2050.

"He's saying, 'Look, the solutions to our economic problems are not to go and do all the things that got us into these problems in the first place, they're to do new things,'" Grandia says. "The world is moving on renewable energy and renewable technology and Canada can either be part of the solution and make a ton of money or we can be left behind and look like dullards on climate change and also look like 'dullards economically. Because that's what we will be." ▾

NEWS | ROUNDUP

NDP REVEALS ABUSE OF CHILDREN

NDP child and youth services critic Rachel Notley on October 20 accused the government of ignoring abuses of children in provincial child welfare and foster care systems as she released a series of confidential quarterly reports by the province's child and youth advocate, John Mould. The reports detail ongoing use of face-down restraints "despite legislative prohibitions" and cases of "peer to peer sexual abuse in which victim and perpetrator remained in the same placement." The reports also indicate

some children are left in unsafe placements due to a lack of other options.

The NDP obtained the reports through a freedom of information request after three years of delayed annual reports from the advocate were tabled in the legislature by Children Services Minister Janis Tarchuk on the opening day of the fall sitting.

Tarchuk defended the advocate at a press conference the next day, saying many of the claims in the reports were unsubstantiated and others had been dealt with. She admitted there is a shortage of placements in the province. NDP leader Brian Mason called the response unacceptable and said the minister should resign immediately or be fired.

The NDP also made a series of rec-

ommendations in response to the information in the reports, including increased funding for placements and improved education for frontline workers, as well as greater transparency through direct reporting by the advocate to the legislature rather than to the minister.

NO BUTTS ABOUT IT

On the heels of fuming by Mayor Stephen Mandel over the amount of cigarette litter on city streets, the city announced October 16 that bylaw enforcement officers would begin ticketing business owners who fail to clean up cigarette butts on sidewalks abutting their property. Under Edmonton's new Community Standards Bylaw, which came into effect on April

1, 2008, businesses which fail to comply can be fined \$250.

The city says surveys have shown discarded cigarette butts make up 35.7 per cent of small litter on city streets, and that arsenic and lead are released when cigarette filters get wet, posing a toxic hazard to wildlife.

VOTE SWAPPERS CLAIM SUCCESS

Organizers behind the two largest vote-swapping initiatives in the recent federal election say voters who agreed to trade their votes helped swing two tight races, including one in Edmonton.

According to an October 16 release, vote swapping through the Anti-Harper Vote Swap Facebook group and votepair.ca website accounted for a

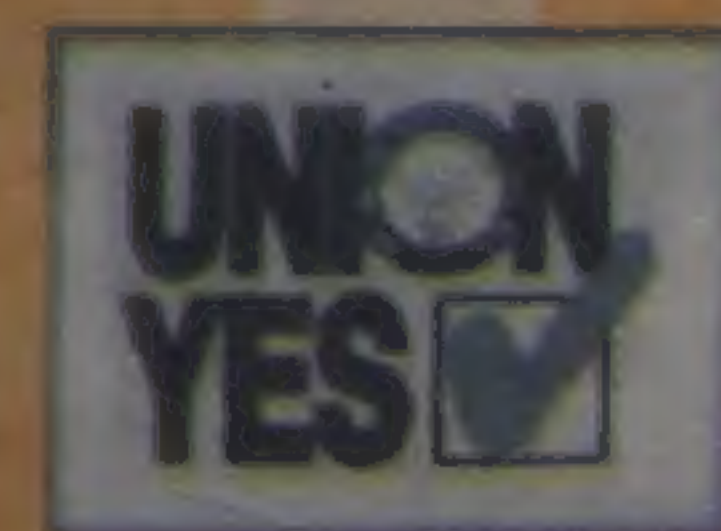
quarter (110 votes) of NDP candidate Linda Duncan's 442-vote margin over Rahim Jaffer in Edmonton-Strathcona. In the BC riding of Esquimalt-Juan de Fuca, where Liberal Keith Martin won by just 68 votes over Conservative Troy DeSouza, the two online groups arranged half of the margin of victory (34 votes). The release points out these totals don't include person-to-person arrangements agreed to on the Facebook group's discussion board and wall.

In total, 6000 voters across 302 ridings registered on the two sites, and 2800 voters were paired. Organizers admit they cannot determine how many actually followed through on their pledge to vote for a particular candidate.

—SCOTT HARRIS / scott@vnewweekly.com

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HEALTH

WELL, WELL, WELL

CONNIE HOWARD
health@vancouverweekly.com

On my mind this week, in the wake of Stephen Harper's re-election, are the realities facing some of those most marginalized among us—the drug addicted, to be specific.

We now have a model of an effective approach to reducing harm among addicts—Vancouver's safe injection program, InSite. But the Harper government has repeatedly tried to shut it down, and Minister of Health Tony Clement has called it an abomination. They believe harm reduction strategies to be a misallocation of tax dollars.

InSite opened in 2003 in the heart of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside as a pilot project aiming to reduce harm among those who have tried unsuccessfully in the past to beat their drug addiction, those injecting publicly in the streets of the city and the homeless.

Operating under a constitutional exception to the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act*, it's a place where addicts can connect to primary healthcare services and addiction treatment. Since its inception, over one million injections have taken place at InSite under the supervision of a nurse.

Results have been carefully monitored, and it has yielded some 30 peer-reviewed scientific papers published in major medical journals that have concluded it to be a success—it saves lives.

InSite has also made the community safer—a 70 per cent drop in needle sharing has resulted in reduced HIV and hepatitis transmission. Safe needle disposal has made the streets safer for local residents and business owners. All those who overdosed at InSite last year received immediate medical attention, and none died. It has resulted in more people seeking addiction treatment. None of the fears voiced by opponents have materialized.

Harper's own advisory committee has examined the evidence and concluded that the site makes financial sense, saves lives, acts as a deterrent to drug use, has not increased crime, drug dealing or relapse rates and effectively increases the number of addicts seeking detox and treatment. Criminologists

commissioned by the RCMP say it should be left open.

STILL, HARPER wants to shut it down. He has turned a deaf ear to the World Health Organization, which calls supervised injection sites priority interventions for slowing the spread of HIV. He has dismissed the views of Vancouver's mayor and police department, who say InSite helps them limit public disorder. He has ignored the views of BC's premier and minister of health. He has seemingly not heard the voices of the three out of four Vancouverites surveyed in a recent Angus Reid poll who support InSite. And he hasn't heard the voices of the healthcare workers in the trenches. He has apparently ignored everyone who has looked at the science and endorsed harm reduction strategies as essential components to

dealing with problems of drug addiction.

Judge Ian Pitfield of the BC Supreme Court gets it. He knows addiction to be a complex, chronic and relapsing condition. Recognizing InSite for what it is—a healthcare facility—he has ruled to protect the program. Harper has appealed his decision.

The international science journal *Nature* has called the Harper government's approach to drug addiction a "manifest disregard for science," and I'm inclined to agree. The argument that addicts don't go to InSite to stop using drugs is as narrow a way of looking at the problem as any I can imagine. While harm reduction is only one component of a broader addictions treatment strategy and won't solve the tragedy of addiction, it is at least humane, and a major step in the right direction.

We also need a serious look at root causes, root causes that include the profound effects of forced dislocation and insufficient psychosocial integration. The effects of ostracism, excommunication and exile are well-known and have long been used as punishment. These conditions, when prolonged and severe, regularly lead to suicide—and to addictions. We need a serious look at the roles of brain circuitry and neurotransmission, the roles of hungry spirits and nutrient-hungry brains.

Concerned scientists, academics, doctors, nurses and other medical professionals can sign on to a letter urging Stephen Harper to support the InSite facility at lettertostephenharper.com. ▼



Copyright 2.0

Conservative win means changes to copyright legislation likely on the way

SCOTT HARRIS / scott@vancouverweekly.com

Late last year, rumours began to swirl that federal Minister of Industry Jim Prentice was about to introduce legislation to make sweeping changes to Canada's copyright laws.

In response, University of Ottawa law professor Michael Geist created a Facebook group to provide a forum for discussion on the expected bill. The reaction was incredible. In less than a week the group had grown to more than 10 000 members, and within a month to 35 000. Fair Copyright for Canada chapters began appearing in cities across Canada, many holding demonstrations at the offices of their local MPs.

The outcry forced the government to delay the bill's introduction by six months. When it finally appeared on June 12 in the form of Bill C-61, the changes confirmed the worst fears of many, drawing comparisons to the restrictive copyright legislation south of the border, the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA).

"If enacted, the Canadian DMCA will leave Canada with one of the most restrictive copyright laws for the digital environment in the world," Geist wrote when C-61 was introduced. "Far from providing assistance to the digital marketplace, this law will have a stifling effect on creativity, innovation, consumer rights and free speech in Canada."

The September 7 election call meant Bill C-61 died on the order

PREVIEW

FRI, OCT 24 (1 PM - 3 PM)

DR MICHAEL GEIST: WHY COPYRIGHT? THE FIGHT FOR CANADA'S DIGITAL FUTURE

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paper, but with the Conservatives winning a second minority government last week, Geist warns that similar legislation will no doubt be introduced when Parliament resumes.

"It seems likely that we're going to see the same bill all over again. Now, when that will happen, I think, for many people is the big question right now," Geist says over the phone from Ottawa. "If we get the same industry minister then I think it's entirely possible that we'll see it very quickly. If not—and there's some speculation both ways—then I think it's within the realm of possibility that it will take a bit longer for a bill, and perhaps the government will respond to much of the criticism that we've seen over the last number of months and make some changes to the bill to reflect the concerns of many Canadians."

Those changes, argues Geist, should start with loosening the bill's tight anti-circumvention rules, which would make it illegal for consumers to try to get around "digital locks"

that control how they can use products they've bought, and which override many of the positive aspects of the bill.

DESPITE THE Conservative win and their platform's pledge to reintroduce the legislation, Geist is buoyed by the the organized reaction to Harper's cuts to arts and culture funding and the potential influence groups like Fair Copyright for Canada—which now boasts over 92 000 members—can have.

"I think it highlights the fact that governments underestimate these kinds of issues at their peril," he says. "It's clear that the public is very engaged, whether we're talking about culture, copyright, I think it's largely within the same basket, and the Internet has really empowered people to speak out and become engaged as never before."

Geist adds that during the recent campaign 34 MPs who went on to win on October 14 signed his three-point pledge committing to a more balanced approach to copyright reform, creating a group in the House of Commons willing to speak out on any new legislation. While no Conservatives signed the pledge, he doesn't think that means there is unanimity on the issue.

"I think privately there were many Conservatives who were somewhat troubled by what C-61 was doing. I think they were taken by surprise to the extent to how far-reaching it was on the personal property of individuals and perhaps that party process will play itself out with some change."

While Geist recognizes that the current economic turmoil has become the number one issue for Canadians, he argues that a balanced approach to intellectual property and how we are able to use technology can play an important role in weathering the current storm.

"The average family is trying to educate their kids for success in the future. The average family is still involved in various forms of entertainment, in communications, in culture. Something like C-61 has a direct impact on how we educate our kids, how we can enjoy and create," he argues. "We're at a time of economic turmoil to be sure, but we're also at a time when Canadians have the ability to speak out and participate and actually find new innovation and new markets as never before. So setting up a legal framework that helps facilitate that, rather than impede it, becomes particularly important at a time of economic trouble." ▼

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The Iraqi deal

COMMENT

DYER STRAIGHT

GWYNNE DYER
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It has been a short hundred years. That's how long Republican presidential candidate John McCain said that American troops might have to stay in Iraq at the beginning of his campaign, but the deal that Washington concluded with the Iraqi government last week said that they must all be gone by 2011. And they must be off the streets of Iraqi cities by the middle of next year.

That's not enough for a lot of Iraqis. Fifty thousand supporters of Moqtada al-Sadr, the Shia leader who embodies the resentment of the poor against the Shia establishment, came out onto the streets of Baghdad on Saturday to protest against the deal signed by Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki. They want the Americans to leave now, which is also Sadr's position, and it may win him a commanding position in parliament when Iraq votes again next year.

We should pause to note the remarkable fact that Iraqi politicians now have to seek popular support for their policies. Even Sadr has stood down the bulk of his Mahdi Army militia, keeping only a core group of experienced fighters to protect him from the Americans and his Iraqi enemies and converting the rest into local political workers. Iraq really does have a kind of democracy now, even if the price was very high.

But it is a democracy built on shaky

foundations, and one of the shakiest bits is the relationship with the United States. Iraqis deeply distrust American intentions, and the Bush administration's initial negotiating position, which sought to prolong the American occupation indefinitely, just fed that suspicion. Although Maliki was effectively chosen by the White House after it removed his predecessor, Ibrahim al-Jaafari, he could not sign that kind of deal.

Maliki stood up for Iraqi sovereignty partly because he would pay for it in next year's election if he did not, but he was never just an American puppet. He opposed the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, and he also opposed the decision of his own party, al-Dawa, to join the first Iraqi "governing council" set up by occupation pro-consul Paul Bremer six months later.

So the negotiations for a "status of forces agreement" to provide legal cover for the US military presence in Iraq after

the United Nations mandate expires in December were not just window-dressing. The Bush administration had to abandon its quest for permanent military bases in Iraq, although there is a clause in the deal that allows for a change of mind in Baghdad.

As Iraqi government spokesman Ali Dabbagh put it, "in 2011 the government at that time will determine whether it needs a new pact or not, and what type of pact will depend on the challenges it faces." But the shoe is definitely on the other foot now, with the American right to keep troops in Iraq lapsing automatically at the end of 2011 unless the Iraqi government wishes otherwise.

Iraq was less successful in trying to make American troops responsible to Iraqi courts for their actions. The deal contains a clause says that Iraqi law will apply "if they commit a serious and deliberate felony outside their bases and when off duty," but in practice no American soldiers leave their bases when off duty, and while on duty they can still kill any Iraqi who seems threatening with no questions asked. However, foreign civilian contrac-

tors will be subject to Iraqi law in future.

IT'S NOT ALL that bad a deal, given the extent to which Maliki's government depends on American troops for survival. But even within the alliance of Shia parties that dominates the government it faces severe criticism, and may not get through parliament. Outside, in the real world, it still feels like a fantasy.

It is now an undisputed factoid in the American political debate that Iraq has been stabilized by last year's "surge" of US troops, but the reality on the ground is rather different. There is less sectarian killing, but that is mainly because the ethnic cleansing of mixed neighbourhoods where Sunni and Shia Arabs used to live side by side is almost complete. Other major outbreaks of violence remain possible.

The "Awakening" movement, in which tens of thousands of Sunni Arabs who had been fighting the American occupation went on the US government payroll in order to fight the take-over of their community by al-Qaeda extremists, is at a crossroads. Starting this month, the "Awakening" fight-

ers are being paid by the Iraqi government, not by the Americans, and it has announced that only 20 per cent of them will be absorbed into the Iraqi army.

The other 60-odd thousand fighters of the "Awakening" will only be paid until they find civilian jobs—but there are almost no well-paying jobs available in Iraq apart from government work, which usually requires a recommendation from one of the big Shia parties. So what do the rest of the Sunni fighters do? Go back to fighting the Americans? It's not unimaginable.

And the possibility of war between Arab Iraq and Kurdish Iraq over the border between the two regions is ever present: the promised referendum on the future of the city of Kirkuk and its surrounding oil-fields is the sword of Damocles hanging over the whole of Iraqi politics. The relative calm that Iraq is experiencing at the moment may just be the eye of the hurricane. ▼

Gwynne Dyer is a London-based independent journalist whose articles are published in 45 countries. His column appears each week in Vue Weekly.

TOP 10 RINGTONES

1) Womanizer
Britney Spears

2) Hot N Cold
Katy Perry

3) So What
Pink

4) Let It Rock
Kevin Rudolf and Lil Wayne

5) Disturbia
Rihanna

6) Just Dance feat. Colby O'Donis
Lady GaGa

7) Another Way to Die
Jack White & Alicia Keys

8) Whatever You Like
T.I.

9) Never Again
The Midway State

10) Keeps Gettin' Better
Christina Aguilera

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Something smells fishy

Edmontonians need more information, opportunity to provide input on transfer of Gold Bar facility to EPCOR

RICARDO ACUÑA / ualberta.ca/parkland

Here we go again. Almost exactly three years after EPCOR's failed bid to obtain the city of Edmonton's entire drainage infrastructure, they are now making a move on Edmonton's Gold Bar Wastewater Treatment Facility.

On September 17, 2008, all staff in the City of Edmonton's Drainage Branch received a memo from the General Manager of the Asset Management and Public Works division of the city informing them that a review was being undertaken "to determine the potential benefit of transferring the Gold Bar Wastewater Treatment Plant to EPCOR."

The final review and recommendations are to be presented to city council on October 29, and the expectation is that council will make a decision vis-à-vis the recommendations at that time. Why the rush? Perhaps EPCOR and the city administration are trying to stifle the

type of public scrutiny and input which ultimately resulted in the 2005 transfer not going through.

The memo provided to staff stated that the review was being undertaken "as part of efforts to explore revenue sources other than property taxes." In other words, the city is facing a difficult year financially, and transferring Gold Bar over to EPCOR would provide a quick injection of cash.

How big an injection? According to some staffers from the drainage department, senior officials have been tossing around figures in the range of \$70 million up front followed by an annual fee for the next six years.

There can be little question that this would be a very welcome amount of cash for a city council contemplating a 10.5 per cent increase in tax rates this year. Given that every \$7.7 million dollars found in the budget results in a one per cent

reduction in property taxes, the \$70 million from EPCOR would almost entirely eliminate the need for increases.

It is critical, however, that city councillors look beyond the immediate needs of the budget and contemplate some of the larger questions surrounding this transfer before making a decision.

Although EPCOR is a city-owned company, it operates entirely as a private corporation. What this means is that its dealings and contracts are entirely beyond the purview of public scrutiny. This reality is aggravated by the fact that there are no elected officials or city staff on its board of directors or among its senior management team. City council, as EPCOR's sole shareholder, is responsible for appointing members to EPCOR's board of directors, but in practice this responsibility is limited by the fact that nominations to the board are actually prepared by a sub-committee of the board and then presented to council for



approval. This is consistent with one of EPCOR's governance principles which states that "EPCOR's Board operates independently of the Shareholder with the full authority to make strategic business decisions." In other words, there is no accountability to or oversight by the people of Edmonton over the workings, service, and decision-making of EPCOR.

Currently, with the Gold Bar plant owned and operated directly by the City of Edmonton, all of its operations are fully open to public scrutiny by the people of Edmonton. This type of oversight and accountability is crucial for an operation as sensitive in terms of public health and the environment as Gold Bar.

EPCOR, because it operates entirely as a private corporate entity, is also very focused on increasing its value in the market. In other words, the more assets it controls and the greater the dividend it pays, the greater the company's value on the open market. The last time city council considered a proposal to sell EPCOR, the proposal was defeated by just one vote. There are no guarantees that the utility will not be sold at some point in the near future, and were this transfer to go ahead all of the expertise, infrastructure and technology that make Gold Bar a best-in-class, world-leading facility would go with it. City council needs to consider the fact that every asset transferred to EPCOR increases the likelihood of future privatization, and the likelihood that a facility paid for by Edmonton taxpayers would go to generate private profit for someone else.

City council must also consider the question of the drainage rates that Edmontonians pay. The implication in the city's memo is that somehow EPCOR will be able to generate more revenue from Gold Bar's operations than the city does. These claims need to be assessed very carefully, because there are generally only two ways that private utility companies increase revenues: they either raise the rates or lower the quality, and therefore the cost, of the service. Neither one of these options would be in the public interest of Edmontonians.

THERE IS ANOTHER aspect of the Gold Bar Wastewater Treatment Plant that has not yet been discussed in all of this, but is very important. Gold Bar is a centre of excellence for research, development and teaching on wastewater treatment and management that is recognized around the world. The facilities include laboratories, classrooms and some of the world's

leading researchers in the field. This intellectual property, and the prestige and attention it brings to Edmonton, is difficult to put a number on, and as such does not tend to get considered when the "market value" of the Gold Bar facility is discussed. Again, the transfer or sale of Gold Bar to EPCOR would mean that this centre of excellence would stop serving the public interest of Edmonton and surrounding area, and would instead be used exclusively to serve EPCOR's profit motive.

This point leads directly to what is perhaps the biggest concern with this transfer. As a city-owned facility, the Gold Bar plant makes its decisions based primarily on what is in the best interests of the people of Edmonton, their health and their environment. Although the management and efficiency of the plant are world-class, costs and profits are not the main drivers determining what is done and how it is done. This would change fundamentally with a transfer to EPCOR. As a for-profit corporation, EPCOR is guided primarily by the quest for reduced costs and increased profits. If faced with a choice between something that would provide public benefit and something that would increase profits, EPCOR's corporate structure mandates that profit be chosen over public benefit.

Certainly city council and Edmonton residents, especially those living near the Gold Bar plant, would not want the public good to take a back seat to profit. Would, for example, a Gold Bar facility run by EPCOR have gone to the lengths and expense it did to minimize the odour in the surrounding communities?

On October 29 Edmonton city council will be presented with a review and recommendation which will likely address none of the issues outlined above. Based on that review, they will be asked to approve or reject the recommendation that Gold Bar be transferred to EPCOR. This is a decision that should not be made based on the city's current need for revenue. All of the points above, and many others, need to be addressed publicly before any decision is made. The city still owns the facility, and as such the citizens of Edmonton are entitled to full disclosure and transparency, and they have a right to input on this decision. If that is not forthcoming, this deal should not even be considered. Phone your councillor today. ♥

Ricardo Acuña is executive director of the Parkland Institute, a non-partisan public policy research institute housed at the University of Alberta.

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BLOG WARS Last week our fellow *Vue Weekly* writer and popular Oilgosphere vet (Covered in Oil) David Berry was working in the Oiler press box as a stringer for a sports stats provider. While up in the Rexall rafters, Berry posted a witty (and cheeky) "live blog" of the Avs/Oilers home opener to Covered in Oil. (Live blogging, like cheering, clapping or hanging out with the TV guys without a sharp suit and great hair, is not allowed in the press box.) Somehow Oilers PR staff found out about the tom-bloggery emanating from the Bill Tuel media gallery and (as described on the blog's post-mortem of his experience) "pulled him aside and informed him he'd no longer be allowed in the press box" despite the fact that he said he was unaware of the rule he'd broken, apologized and pulled the post off the blog. Then he chose to stop contributing to Covered In Oil, partly because of that experience. The MSM (Main Stream Media) vs blog debate fired up. Sports bloggers (spo-blos?) across the continent downloaded opinions, criticisms and support in typical reactionary internet speed. It was a lively couple of cyber-days.

But, curiously, one angle in this whole incident seemed to be overlooked: how did the Oilers know Berry was live blogging anyway? Were the Oilers reading over his shoulder? Were they tipped off by someone in the press box? MSM media, perhaps? Or do they actually **check up on bloggers in Oil?**

The most present thing about *Big Buck Hunter* is the sound. Not the in-game audio of gunfire, running deer and flapping wings—that's usually well drowned by the jukebox, the band or the general high-decibel rhubarb of barroom bullshitting—but the relentless plasticly clattering of the game's candy-coloured shotgun controllers being pumped rapidly and relentlessly. *Chakka-chakka-chakka-chakka-chakka-*

However the live blog was discovered, the Oillogosphere appears to be on the Oiler radar. And it should be. There's an important element the scores of Oiler websites provide for Oiler decision makers: unfettered access to free marketing data. Any business that gets pages of information about their customers (actual and potential) literally spoon-fed to them would be crazy and irresponsible to ignore it.

I hope this doesn't mean Oilers staff read (monitor) this column too. I don't know if I want that pressure. In The Box is for your average hipster-looking, club-going, art-loving, eco-friendly, restaurant-going, politically-aware and hockey-watching film buff. All nine of you.

All this aside, *Covered in Oil* will now be one-third less interesting to read without Berry. **DY**

POOL SHARK As comedian Demetri Martin said, "There's a big difference between peeing in the pool, and peeing into the pool." This has nothing to do with hockey pools, but it's damn funny. This is the time of year when we get together with some friends, have a few beers and pick our hockey pool teams for the season. And at about this time every year, I always think I'm going to win. But I never do. I have a good track record in playoff pools but the regular season always seems to throw me a few curves. Last year, I led for about 95 per cent of the season, just to tank it so bad that I nearly came last after injuries took out half my team down the stretch.

It's always easy to spot the poolsters watching a game; no matter what team scores, they only want to know who got the goals and who got the assists. It does make games a lot more fun to watch, especially when Atlanta and Columbus are playing

This year, I think I have a damn good team. I have, by my reckoning, a solid bunch of forwards, as well as who I would regard as the best rookie, goalie and three of the best defensemen out there. So, of course, I'm already resigned to the fact that I won't be winning my pool again this year. TB

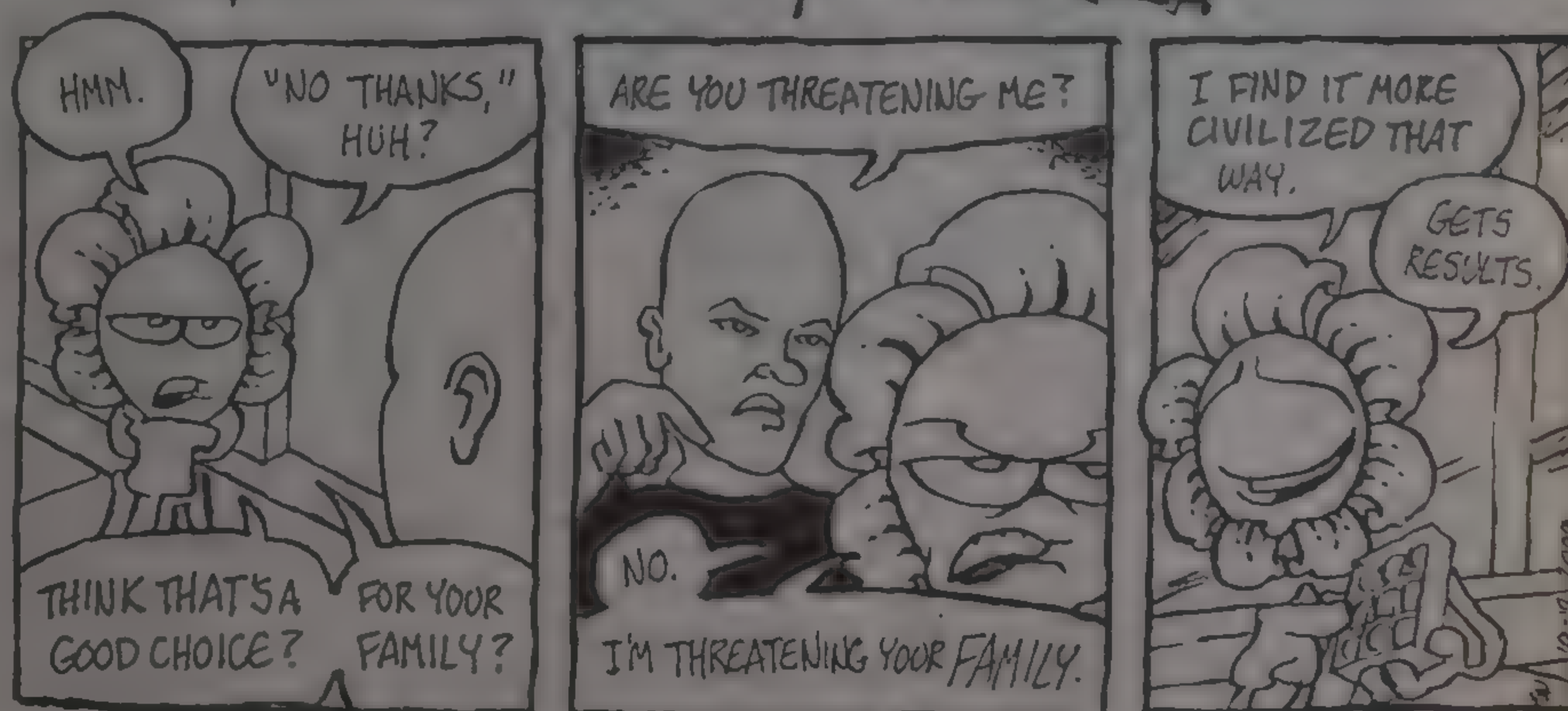
"Jaffer": (verb) 1. To be incapable of accepting defeat, as in "The Oilers, down 2-0 to Calgary after the first period, Jafferred and rallied to win the game." ♡

So there's your answer to the question of why a real hunter would be into a hunting video game, especially when the season's open and the real thing is just a sick day away: because it's so fake it's awesome. It's the same reason why a musician would play *Rock Band* or a skateboarder would play *Tony Hawk*. Video games are their own thing, their priorities and prerogatives utterly unlike those of the activities whose names they appropriate. You're not "hunting" in *Big Buck Hunter* any more than you're "killing hookers and taking their money" in *Grand Theft Auto*; you're playing *Big Buck Hunter*.

IF ANYTHING, the fantasy forests and fields here presented are even more outlandish in comparison to hunting's reality than even *Guitar Hero's* version of rock stardom is in comparison to the life and times of an actual touring musician. Just

But every garden has its serpent, right? Paradisaical as the glades and trails of *Big Buck Hunter* may be—and they are little paradises; you should see the Promised-Land look on a hunter's face as he pauses to gaze at the peaceful scene before the virtual twig snaps and the deer break and run—it wouldn't be a game if there weren't challenges. Now, I know that at the higher echelons of *Big Buck Hunter* play—like *Golden Tee*, the Grand Old Man of the boozecan-

You can eventually figure out how badly fucked your aim is, of course, and adjust to compensate, but that takes time and time costs loonies. Precious, precious loonies that might otherwise be beefing up the anemic tips you've been giving the barmaid. Better to forget precision, and revel in the glorious scattershot, let-God-sor-ry-out-fuck-lade *Big Buck Hunter* all ways you, cha-cha-chakka-chakka-chakka chakka chakka-chakka-chakka.



This time it's personal

RUNNERS NEMESIS

Every skier has one. A run that you consistently balk at or bail on. The one that scares you stiff, mocks you, haunts your dreams. It keeps you going through the off-season, just waiting for another chance. You can picture it in your head. It's known as a "nemesis run." It doesn't have to be a big, bad double black. It can be any run, for any reason: ice, bumps, trees, consistent crowds, awkward fall line, chairlift exposure or just the slope's own indescribable mystique.

We at SnowZone wanted to share a few of our nemeses to get you primed for the season. Because what truly inspires many of us isn't the run we've already dialed, but the one we haven't quite perfected yet

Stories by Colin Cathrea (CC), Jeremy Derksen (JD), Colin Wiseman (CW)

PTARMIGAN, LAKE LOUISE

Just over 30 years ago, my love-hate affair with one of Lake Louise's most bad-ass runs began. Ptarmigan and I have a long-standing relationship which has seen me injured, embarrassed and triumphant.

It was 1973. The Crazy Canucks were a few years into their winning streak and the world was taking notice. I had just made the Alberta Ski Team as a junior. Every now and then, our coach was able to line up training with the national team and the Crazies. One day we left the main lodge at Lake Louise for some "free skiing." We immediately went over to Ptarmigan, where the national team boys skied over to a tree on

edge of the run.

Ken Read took off his ski and hacked a notch into the bark. "From here," was all he said. He put his ski back on and went, skiing straight from about the last third of the mogul-laden run. By the time he hit the bottom he was doing about 100 kilometers per hour and blasted out onto the flats. Next was Dave Irwin, who lost a ski and crashed hard, but recovered.

Later in the day the junior Alberta Team was trying to straightline from about the bottom five per cent of the run. I was on a pair of 223-centimetre skis that had a pair of "red springs" in the Look Nevada bindings. On the lowest setting I could not release: they were designed for a 200-pound hulk like Jim Hunter. But there was no way I was telling anyone, or they might take away my prize possession. I went straight from as high as everyone else, luckily without crashing. But the multiple trips skiing down that mogul-filled run on 223's was the most excruciating experience of my life.

Years later I still find myself drawn back to that run. Its moguls are usually terrible, it's never groomed and it never has much snow. There is a spring at the bottom that creates a nice icy patch. I always try to ski it non-stop, and one day after attempting just that I crashed on my face and broke my nose.

I often ski by and take the easy way down nowadays. But she still seems to call my name to give her another try. I sometimes do, and usually ski like an idiot. Something about that run ... CC

DROP ZONE, MOUNT BAKER

I know that the Drop Zone cliffs in Eagle East are sweet sirens leading me to the rocks. But their beautiful music and the promise of a pristine 20-foot drop into a wide open bowl gets me every time.

The first time I launched it, I followed a pro patroller in. I skied off the ledge, looked down at the jagged cliff below, lost my nerve, dropped my tips and did an instant double eject into endless somersaults. No harm done, just a long climb uphill and 10 minutes of digging to find my buried skis in the deep snow. And the shame of eating it hard in front of the patrol.

On the upside, it built my confidence. I stuck it clean several times before my next incident. It was early spring but the snow was still ideal and it looked like a soft landing. I came in fast and soared out over the cliffs into a picture-perfect sunburst. I nailed the landing, banking right and spraying up a triumphant plume of cold smoke in my wake. And then my right ski stopped dead. Off balance, I kept going another few feet and crumpled. A sharp boulder had torn right down to the base of my ski and blown out an edge, thin ribbons of steel curling back from the laceration. This time I got some good bruises from the minefield lurking beneath the alluring powder.

To say I'm obsessed is an understatement. It's become a rivalry, and I can't wait for the next battle. JD

WAR CHILD, SUNSHINE

There is a place, open to the public, where I won't ski. It's up at Sunshine Village in the advanced area known as Silver City. It's a run called War Child and I just can't get up the nerve to try it. It has two places known as "no-fall" zones. That means if you fall, there is a good likelihood you could die. The pro patrols stress it is imperative that anyone trying this route spend a good deal of time scouting the terrain before even thinking about trying a run.

Back in the day, I may have had a go at it, but I just can't get up the nerve since it opened a few years back. My heart races when I get up to the control gate. I've done Delirium Dive quite a few times and had a couple of good crashes. But I look up at War Child from the bottom and can't see how I could do it. I have seen the pro patrol do it. I've been invited by a couple of locals who ensure me I can ski well enough to make it. But I just can't will myself to go there. Damn you War Child. I've even had nightmares about it, my face smashed while I sit in a wheelchair.

One of the reasons may be that I've looked at it for decades as I've been going up to the resort. I've always thought there was no way to ski it. I've traversed under it, studied it from Delirium Dive and watched video. Can't do it man. CC

GUNSIGHTS, MOUNT BAKER

A lot of lines scare the crap out of me. The first time I dropped into Delirium Dive at Sunshine, I was terrified. But there's only one run that I've contemplated numerous times without sacking up and dropping in: Gunsights. Gunsights sits about half way down the infamous "knob" zone on Mount Baker, probably the gnarliest piece of inbounds terrain on a mountain known for steep. It has been ridden by all of the legendary riders to come out of the Pacific Northwest—guys like Craig Kelly, Tex Devenport, Temple Cummins, the list goes on. You have to duck a couple warning ropes to get in there that put the risk solidly in your hands. Take a wrong turn and you can get cliffed out on numerous 80-footers and sketchy pillow lines.

The first time I stood up there was a typical Mount Baker day with two feet of wet snow and limited visibility. The line itself is around 50 degrees and a couple hundred feet long with little snaggy tree tops in the middle. My friend showed it to me before backing away himself. It's too skinny to turn—a mandatory straight line into the steep, open face below. Typical Baker sloughy conditions scared me off that day, and since then when the knob is going off I always stop to stare down the chute before moving on. Maybe this year I'll finally turn right and hop the treetops through the gunsights. CW

Maybe you think the same predictable turns on the same safely groomed slope is the epitome of pleasurable skiing. Or perhaps you prefer a hot chocolate by the fireplace in the lodge. Both are respectable options that help keep the chairs turning at the resorts. But if you're already sharpening your edges, doing lunges and stretches and pouring over roadmaps, you may have a nemesis of your own. And this may be your year. ▼

Tell us about your nemesis in 300 words or less at nemesisrun@vueweekly.com, and we'll feature a selection of the best stories online in SnowZone's season premiere on November 20, 2008. Entries must be submitted by November 7.

A little every day



SKI TIPS

KEVIN L. HART
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I write this with a pencil in a lined notebook sitting on a rough bench 10 kilometres up a deep valley. The trail starts not far from the Elk River and wanders across alluvial flats into a throat where the valley narrows and the walls rise steeply among timber and alders. In another few kilometres, grey cliffs break the walls. Ahead, at the point where the valley swings right, a massif lifts unbroken to the ridge.

Where I sit, writing, I can almost pick out the green roof of my little house in Fernie. Could, if I had binoculars. And this spot I can see from my living room window. Once a week I hike this trail to see if my pre-season training is working. Am I getting stronger? Is the hike easier?

During high school and college, I worked out year-round for over six years. This experience instilled a deep-seated aversion to gyms. I want to get in shape, but not inside watching TV on a treadmill. Something's missing there.

a flexibility and ease. I touch the rug almost flat with my palms. My hiking is not as obvious.

My rides are longer at a fast pace and I push on the hills, really pumping. On the hikes, I elevate my heart and keep it banging for as long as possible. Rather than stopping, I slow occasionally, but keep going as long as possible. I boulder once a week for balance and upper body strength.

Every day. A little in the morning. More in the afternoon. And a longer push at sunset as the clouds turn over the ribs and ridges of the Lizard Range.

For two weeks, snow hung new on the ridges, in the couloirs and blanketed the upper basins. Winter arrived high and will drop into the valley soon.

This year I want to be as fit as I've ever been. ▼

So instead, everyday I spend at least an hour doing some form of exercise outdoors. I mountain bike. I hike. I use my car as little as possible. Instead of driving, I leave 10 or 15 minutes early and walk. Fast. This year I started jumping rope once a day.

I take the mantra of my college swim coach. "It's not how big, it's how many." His message to the macho: one big lift is nowhere as good as 10 smaller lifts.

EVERY MORNING I start my routine with a quick stretch on the Afghani prayer rug in my living room. Simple stretches. First, I bend over touching the rug with my fingers. Then I alternate arms across my legs, right reaching to the left side and left to the right. Without straining, I gently pull the tendons and muscles in my legs.

Then, sitting with my legs out straight in front of me, I bend my head toward my knees, leaning, following the reach of my arms toward my toes. Folding one leg behind me, I repeat, trying to touch head to knee. I twist my torso feeling the back muscles pull against the motion. First one way, then the other. Switch legs and repeat.

My stretching works. A week or two after my start, I realize a new looseness.

Whistler's 'Peak 2 Peak' launches big

SNOW ZONE

FALL LINES

HART GOLBECK
hart@vuweekly.com

HART GOLBECK / hart@vuweekly.com

On December 12, Whistler Blackcomb will be opening a new gondola that spans the peaks of its major mountains. Dubbed the "Peak 2 Peak" Gondola, this \$51 million construction is a true feat of engineering. First ground was broken in May 2007 and the cabins started arriving this year in August. One cabin is on a victory lap across Canada but unfortunately Edmonton is not a stop. Apparently Winnipeg, Calgary and Regina rated higher because those cities will all get a personal tour. Interestingly enough, this endeavour does not open any new terrain on either mountain but rather increases rider efficiency by enabling skiers and boarders to move quickly and easily from the top of one mountain to the other.

The total distance between peaks is 4.4

kilometres, but there are only four towers (two on each hill) leaving an unsupported span of approximately three km across the middle. At 59 millimetres, the supporting cable is pretty thick, since it has to support 28 cabins that can each hold up to 28 riders. Total lift capacity will be 2050 riders per hour with a ride time of 11 minutes. If you want to see pictures, check it out at whistlerblackcomb.com

While visiting the web page, don't forget to enter the Peak 2 Peak Gondola contest. The winning entry stands to win the biggest ski prize I have ever heard of. Included is a four-day trip for four to Whistler, accommodations at the Chateau Whistler, Fresh Tracks ticket, a gondola full of gear and clothing, ski lessons and a \$250 après ski bar tab. Some of the gondola gear includes Atomic ski and board packages, cell phones, Wii consoles, six cases of Red Bull, eight cases of coke and dozens more items that you'll have to see for yourselves. I do know that the winner will have some pretty happy friends. ▼

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Riding in a winter wonderland

JEREMY DERKSEN / snowzone@vancouverweekly.com

The bay door of the **Edmonton Bicycle Commuters** workshop opens and a glaring white sun bursts into the room. Looking out, bicycles suspended on repair stands fragment the diffuse light filtering through the frosty air on a late October day. Spokes, chains and frames in silhouette. In the yard some 30 or so used bikes stand propped against one another, surrounded by a tall chain link fence creeping with bare brown vine.

By this time of year I'm usually hanging around the local ski shops checking out the new gear. First frost comes and a switch trips in my brain. From then until Slush Cup, I can't think about anything but skiing. Lately though, I've begun to suspect I'm missing something.

Like maybe I'm letting external influences alter my consumption and understanding of winter sport. Take the notion of finite sporting seasons. Talking to Molly Turnbull, an EBC member and avid winter cyclist, almost gives the impression that winter is the natural season for bicycling. "The sound of tires on snow is quite wonderful," she enthuses. "The motion of the bike, the fresh air—it's more fun than people realize. I feel happily excluded when people talk about the winter doldrums."

I shouldn't need to be reminded. I



TIRES

I rode through several Edmonton winters and enjoyed it, until the day I froze my fingers. I was using some cheap neoprene paddling gloves. One night riding home, the temperatures plummeted and the wind picked up. By the time I got there my fingers were so cold and stiff I couldn't open my front door. I knocked feebly, my hands feeling like they were going to shatter into pieces, and eventually somebody

inside heard. It took 20 minutes for the incapacitating pain to subside. It wasn't so much intentional, but after that I began to neglect my bike for more traditional winter activities.

Proper dress is something Turnbull stresses in the winter biking seminars she gives at the EBC. Dressing to prevent moisture is an important consideration for any winter sport, but especially when riding on snowy, slushy roads. Get too sweaty or let moisture seep through and a chill can set in quickly.

To help winter cyclists acclimatize,

Turnbull has strategies for adapting both bike and rider to the season—adding or extending fenders (to deflect tire spray), choosing proper attire, studding tires and route finding. Admittedly it takes some time to adjust she says, but, "once you get into the routine it's easy."

THE WORKSHOP is filling up. Clanging wrenches, rhythmic, chattering gears and voices merge in productive song. Despite cooler temperatures, there are none of the usual banalities about the weather. Robert Drinkwater, one of the EBC's volunteer mechanics, works his way from one person to the next doling out assistance.

Drinkwater has put an estimated 13 000 kilometres on his old red touring bike. For the past five to six years he's ridden winters in Edmonton and considers it a relatively easy city for winter riding because it's drier and less salty than other places he's been, such as St John's, Newfoundland.

Many winter cyclists view winter driving as miserable. Both Turnbull and Drinkwater talk about the hassle of warming up the car, scraping it off, shoveling it out and inching through bottleneck traffic. "If you spend the whole winter rushing to and from the car," says Turnbull,

"winter is arduous."

Cycling introduces an element of adventure. One of EBC's busiest days last season was also one of the coldest, Turnbull recalls, with excited bikers dropping in to share stories. Drinkwater reminisces about fishtailing in "brown sugar snow" and running into friends on the "bicycle highway" (the City's multi-use trails).

With adventure also comes risk, but this is true of any sport. Slick surfaces, deep ruts and poor visibility can all be hazardous. Main roads are often better because they are cleared first. However, this means contending with more vehicles. Turnbull recommends reflective wear and lighting, controlled riding and smart lane positioning to ensure safety in traffic situations. Winter may change how you ride, but it doesn't have to stop you.

Across the vacant lot from the shop, engines are switching tracks.

the Strathcona CPR train yards, pedal down the alley and make a left on 100 Street over to Whyte Ave, where traffic is backing up from construction on the Mill Creek Bridge.

Transportation defines our society in many ways.

the intersecting grids that determine our paths. But to me, it's starting to look more like a giant slalom course than gridlock. ▼

Cyclists who want to learn more about winter cycling strategies can attend the EBC's free winter cycling seminar on Thu, Nov 20 from 7 - 9 pm. A tire-studding session will take place on Thu, Dec 4 from 6:30 - 9 pm. Prices for the tire session range from \$5 for studs and tire linings, to \$10 - \$20 for a quality used tire. For more details, check out edmontonbikes.ca. ▼

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Hart's annual weather report

HART GOLBECK / hart@vueweekly.com

Here we are once again, breathlessly waiting to see what winter will have in store for us this year. For some of you it's just curiosity, because you'll go looking for the snow no matter how far. But for the individual mountain resort operators, it's nail-biting time.

As I write, a flake has yet to settle on Edmonton ground, but history says it won't be long. The annual Warren Miller film, usually Edmonton's unofficial kickoff to the snow sport season, arrives here on November 21. Sunshine and Lake Louise are planning early November openings, and Sunshine has already had some serious snowfalls to back up their plan.

Generally, though, at most resorts to date there have only been occasional flurries. I wanted to find out more about this upcoming winter's weather, so I did a little digging. I would have called Bryan Hall's guy at 630 CHED but his predictions are way too nice, making fair weather on the gloomiest days. I wasn't interested in sunny optimism, I wanted snow. So I moved on.

First was the Fajja blog (fajja.co.uk) out of Scotland, a site maintained by an aspiring pilot and amateur meteorologist. His basis of predictions revolves around La Niña. According to him this year's summer melt in the arctic was not as severe as last year. Because of this he predicts that our winter will be snowier and colder than average.

At Whistler Blackcomb the snow came early. The resort received a huge dump on September 22. This prompted their independent weather forecaster to predict an above average snowfall year with normal to milder temperatures. Down in Colorado, Arapahoe Basin has opened already with 18 inches of snow. One chair is operating, but at least it's a start—and an early one at that.

ENVIRONMENT CANADA (weatheroffice.gc.ca) has posted their predictions

OF PREDICTIONS

based on a 40-run model, which, if I understand right, takes 40 past weather scenarios and plugs them into some calculations that yield a trend they can use to base their predictions. I'm no expert, but the way I read the multitude of graphs, there is a 30 per cent chance of normal, 30 per cent below normal and 40 per cent chance of above normal precipitation. With a 70 per cent chance of normal or above average precipitation, the high side wins and it appears they are predicting a slightly better than average year.

My next stop was the National Weather Service Climate Prediction Center (cpc.noaa.gov). They have a summary of the outlook for non-technical users, but it seemed pretty technical to me. After pouring through their data for 20 minutes, I came to the conclusion that this year all conditions are neutral and we will have an average year of precipitation with slightly higher than normal temperatures.

The AccuWeather (accuweather.com) page was tough to decipher but I did draw out of it the part about cold northern temperatures clashing with the warm south in late October and early November, creating some serious storms across the Rockies.

My final stop was the *Farmer's Almanac*. This one I did not like because it is predicting a "numbing" cold winter with a normal to drier precipitation trend. I'm hoping the *Almanac* is wrong once again, considering global warming and all.

But the best predictor of all came from Matt Mosteller, marketing director for Resorts of the Canadian Rockies. He told me that down at Fernie the Kokanee Glacier Girls were wearing much heavier mittens and parkas than normal. A definite sign of a snowy winter to come and you know they don't wear those in the hot tub so it's not all bad. ▼

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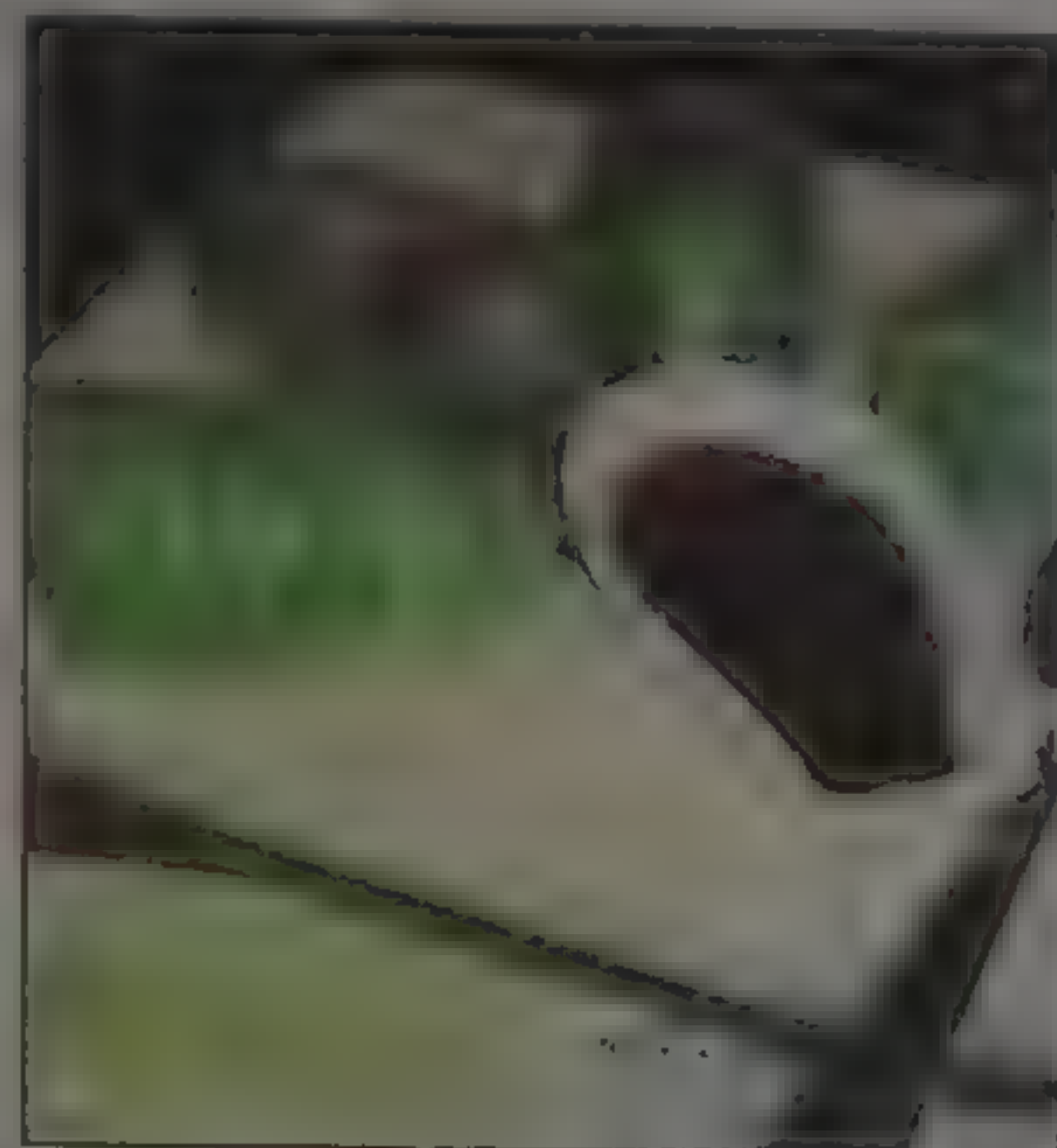
Photo: [illegible] / [illegible]

Sometimes think my brain is tucked away so neatly inside my skull as an avoidance mechanism—it's in hiding so that it never has to take any sort of responsibility whatsoever for the whole decision making process. When I try to summon it to take action, it just scurries back further, pulls the covers over its head, and checks out for the night. It can drive me absolutely crazy, but I recently discovered that it's not all bad.

The other night my fickle brain failed me yet again, but my husband's brain, always eager to assert its decision-making prowess, took over in the wake of my ambivalence. Our feet propelled us off of 124 St and into **Matahari**—a perfect choice for the decision-challenged amongst us. They advertise themselves as providing "a truly pan-Asian dining experience," something I quickly learned meant that they served a wide variety of cuisines from South East Asia, or, as they put it, "an exotic culinary tour of Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Singapore, Indonesia, Nepal and Burma." Wow—maybe someone else has a bit of trouble with the whole decision-making thing too.

Matahari is definitely not of the tacky-vinyl-chair-and-rickety-table-cafeteria-style atmosphere. While we waited at the multi-functional "Please wait here to be seated" counter that not only houses the menus but also doubles as a jewelry boutique, I took in the serene atmosphere. A big pond occupied the center of the room, and beside this pool of soothing water rose boxy booths galore, kind of like an inverted pyramid. The booths were all done in deep greens and oranges, there was dark wood everywhere and the dropped, muted lighting just added to the coziness factor. My husband decided the effect was one of a slightly dated steakhouse, but I had to disagree: to me it was modern but comfortable.

UNTIL WE WERE SEATED, that is. The waitress led us to one of the booths on the upper level and once we settled in I discovered it wasn't nearly as private and comfy as it looked. Because the backs of the booths were kind of stubby, we had ample opportunity to ogle at the tables next to us, and they returned the favour. And when we spoke, even in our most quiet and respectful voices, our voices seemed to carry throughout the room, as did everyone else's.



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But we were there to eat, not for talking, which is vastly overrated anyway. Thankfully, the menu was a glossy one-page, two-sided affair—not the 152-item variety that makes life for us decision-challenged so difficult. It was no small feat considering they offered so many different varieties of cuisines. Don't get me wrong, there was still ample selection among all the appetizers, soups, salads, noodles, curries, stews, seafood, wok and grill choices and vegetarian selections—but it was manageable, even for me.

Knowing the decisions weren't going to be easy, we ordered the fresh mango rice paper wraps (\$4.25), a Singha (\$5.95), and a Tsingtao (\$5.25) so we had some sustenance while debating the rest of the menu. But it didn't take nearly as long as we thought it would, and were ready to order the rest of our meal by the time the beers made it to the table. Our decision: an order of Shaking Beef (\$10.95), an order of Kurma Chicken (\$10.95) and the Vegetable Medley (\$9.95) without the tofu. When asked how hot we wanted everything, we promptly replied "hot."

(I have to mention that there a bunch of celiac-friendly and vegetarian options on the menu—not that everyone will care, but it's a very nice touch.)

The mango rolls made an appearance in short order, minimally but smartly presented on a white square plate with a little white bowl full of dipping sauce. We each immediately grabbed half a roll, dipped and bit.

While it was stuffed full of a very fresh spring greens mixture and lots of juicy mango, the red bell pepper, the red onion and the coriander were much harder to find. They were good, and extremely fresh, but the spring greens dominated them a bit too much. More dipping sauce would have been nice, too. But we still demolished them.

AFTER A FEEBLE ATTEMPT at hushed conversation, our other dishes arrived. Each one was presented as its own unique beautiful entrée, complete with a flared square timbale of perfectly steamed white rice.

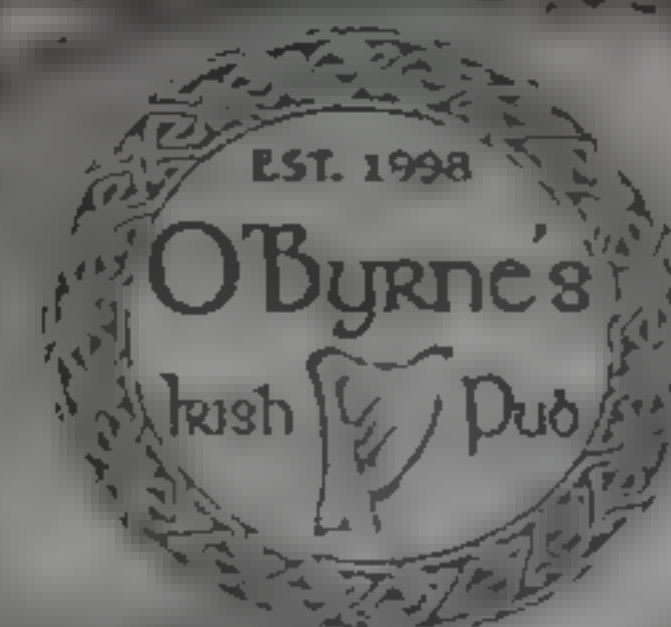
I decided to start by taste-testing everything. The menu described the Shaking Beef as cubes of beef in a citrusy, Vietnamese-style sauce with lettuce, onions and tomatoes, and it reminded me of a dark, powerful, not-so-sweet version of anything sweet-and-sour. The beef went well with the tomatoes and was so tender it was sometimes hard to tell them apart. And yes, it was hot.

The Kurma Chicken was up next. Basically, it was an extremely hot chicken curry with peas, served with a side of steamed veggies. Again, the chicken was oh-so-tender and the veggies were crisp and pleasantly naked—not soaking in sauce. My husband's tongue quit burning after the first few bites, and he ended up loving this dish.

I, however, had moved on to the Vegetable Medley and claimed it as my own. A combination of perfectly tender yet crisp carrots, green and red peppers, baby corn, bok choy, snow peas, mushrooms and celery, each bite was different and delicious. They were stir-fried in a gingery-garlicky-soy sauce that was light but full of flavour without drowning in a thick, cloying sauce. And I could actually see flecks of crushed red pepper throughout, adding a nice bite to everything.

I finished my veggies—they were too good not to—but we did have enough leftovers to feed at least one of us the next day. And as tempted as I was by the Roti Canai—a Malaysian-Indian crepe topped with ice cream and fresh mango—I just couldn't do it.

Matahari was a pleasant surprise. The atmosphere takes some getting used to, but the food is incredibly fresh and really, really good. And really, really hot, just like we wanted (though it doesn't have to be). See, being decision-challenged can be an extremely good thing. ♡



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The family that works together

Block 1912's family of owners are the hands-on type

JAN HOSTYN / jan@vancouverweekly.com

Wander into Block 1912 on White Ave at any given moment and, chances are, one of the owners will be buzzing about—whether scooping gelato for the hungry hordes, clearing the clutter from recently vacated tables or simply surveying the character-filled room, pondering what to tackle next. Because it is a hands-on family business, there's always something to do.

The Pepin family took over the business from another family not quite two years ago, and they like to say that it was kept in the family—just passed down. The relationship is kind of complicated and had my head spinning even on the third run-through, but it basically boils down to this: Peter Pepin's best friend is the brother of the original owner, and Peter's wife is the original owner's second cousin. There was no master plan; it more or less just happened.

As Pepin tells the story, he had retired from teaching just a few years before and was becoming a bit of a perfectionist—you could often find him putzing away in his beautiful garden or scrubbing his scrupulously clean garage floor (yet again), one he swears that you could eat off of. But the day his wife came home and found him diligently absorbed in the monumental task of washing some



PROFILE THE PEPIN FAMILY
OWNERS, BLOCK 1912

rocks by the house, they took it as a sign. Obviously, someone needed something a bit more challenging to occupy his time with.

It was right around this time that

Block 1912 went up for sale and, consequently, Pepin stopped washing rocks.

The grey afternoon that I rushed in the door, Peter was at the helm. While all four members of the Pepin family own Block 1912, it is Peter and his two sons, Kaylan and Jorel, who look after the day-to-day operation of it. And by operation, I don't mean hiring people to run it for them: they do have employees, but they roll up their sleeves and

like to lead by example—I heard stories of washing floors, wiping tables and even cleaning bathrooms.

Peter says it just seems like a natural extension of what he retired from just a few years ago—teaching. Now he's just teaching his employees. And before he went back to university to get his degree, he was involved in the restaurant business, so he wasn't coming in completely unaware.

ORIGINALLY FROM MONTREAL, he moved to Calgary when he was 20 and started working for White Spot, with the illustrious position of pot-washer. Perseverance paid off, and he was transferred to Edmonton where he worked up the ranks, cooking for six years and eventually managing. He also put in a stint as a chef at the Mayfair Golf & Country Club.

Those cooking skills he acquired are now being put to good use, although he readily admits that it's not at home. But it is Peter himself who devises and whips up the daily soups (and everything else that is lacking in sugar) in Block 1912's tiny, cubicle-sized kitchen, on his little two-burner stove. And it was with great delight that he treated me to a tour of this much-cherished cooking space.

He must have seen my eyes get a bit wider, for he quickly reassured me that all the sweet, decadent, sugary concoctions are created by their own baker—certified from NAIT—in a separate space in the basement.

And it was also with great delight that he gave me a tour of the rest of Block 1912, kind of like a proud papa. I saw the humongous 50-year-old paintings and the assorted sentimental knickknacks; I saw the mismatched tables, each with its own piece of history; I even saw the bathrooms, meticulously clean and tastefully decorated.

As we were surveying the tables, Peter launched into a description of the eclectic assortment of people that spend a piece of their day at the café—knitting groups, debate clubs, round table groups (that sit at square tables), seniors, mothers, high school kids, the list goes on.

Peter was definitely excited and passionate—something he wants to pass

along to each and every one of his employees. That's why he feels that this stint as owner of Block 1912 is just an extension of his teaching career. He's still teaching—teaching enthusiasm and excitement, teaching great customer service, teaching how to love what you do. He's just not teaching from a set of books or a rigid curriculum anymore, and it's in a different environment.

AS I WAS LEANING on the counter, listening intently while Peter described in detail all their own touches that they had brought to Block 1912—like their big recycling push and the tweaking of the menu—20-year-old Kaylan wandered in. After dealing with a stack of dirty dishes that was sitting on the counter, he armed himself with a bottle of disinfectant and began wiping down assorted surfaces. It was interesting to see him just dive into the less glamorous side of running a restaurant.

Before I wandered back out into the cold drizzle, I sat down for a brief chat with Kaylan. I could tell he was antsy sitting there—his eyes kept darting back and forth, probably making mental notes of everything that needed to get done and how he was getting none of it accomplished at the moment.

I didn't keep him long, but I did have one question I had neglected to ask Peter. Since this was a family business, not only owned by the family but run by the family, how did they all manage to get along—or did they? Lots of families have enough trouble maintaining some semblance of peace during the small amount of time they spend together at home, but when they actually work together, doesn't it lead to inevitable strife?

Kaylan only had to think about it briefly before he answered. "At home, everyone has their own goals and agendas. When you work together, everyone is working toward the same goal." It made total sense—and with that I let him get back to what he was having a hard time tearing himself away from: Block 1912.

So pop in to this cozy café and meet the Pepin family. You won't see Peter washing any rocks, but you just might see him wiping down the counters. ▽



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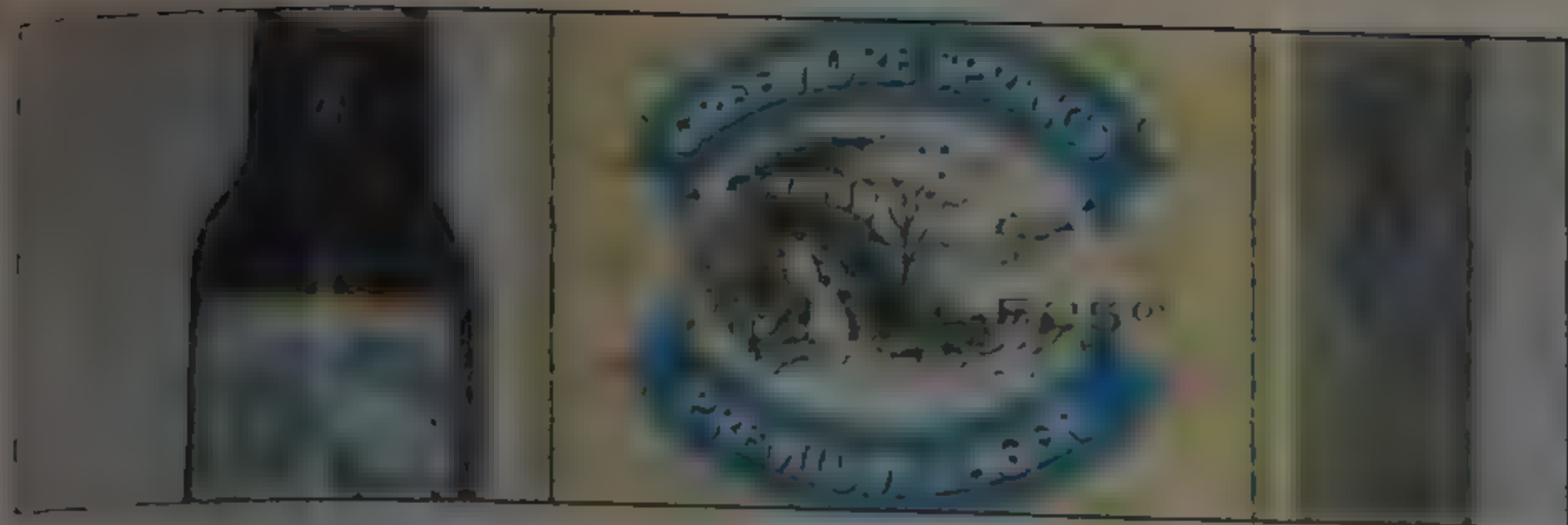
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For most beer drinkers, a crisp, clean pale lager is what defines beer. On the other hand, for most beer appreciators, the north American lager style is deservedly maligned. Most of the big boy breweries have turned that style into an insipid and boring concoction, where it's difficult to tell one from the other.

But in brewing terms, the pale lager is actually a very difficult style to brew well, because the brewmaster has nowhere to hide. Any small flaw is easily detected in these light-bodied, crisp beers. Yet when it's done well, it can be one of the most satisfying and enjoyable glasses of beer a person can have.

The trick to brewing a quality lager is simplicity. A simple recipe with straightforward brewing methods. Nothing fancy; just good sense and a commitment to quality.

A brewery I have always associated with quality and simplicity is Creemore Springs. They, until recently, only brewed one beer (with the occasional seasonal special), and focused on making it a great beer: no fancy techniques, no pasteurization, no cut corners or corn additions. Even their name is simple—Creemore Springs from Creemore. And the beer: Creemore Springs Premium Lager. Simple.

Their Premium Lager is widely considered to be one of the best lagers in the country, and I've certainly had many a pint, and have never come away dissatisfied. As these things happen, it has been some time since I had one, being distracted as I was by other, more curious beers lately.

Plus, I admit, I was concerned about the fact Molson bought Creemore from the family that founded it in 1987. The purchase was back in 2005, and many in the beer world lamented the potential loss of a high quality beer, fearing Molson would sick its economists on the brewery and water down a fine beer.

I FOUND MYSELF picking up a six pack a few weeks ago for the heck of it. The beer is a deep orange-gold with a sharp white head. The aroma is attractive with a pilsner grain sweetness, touches of toffee and hints of biscuit. I got just a light hit of floral hop aroma as well.

When I sipped it, I was struck by the soft, full malt sweetness. It is a biscuity and toasty malt flavour. The hops are secondary, just adding a wisp of bitterness to dry out the finish.

Creemore continues to be a first-rate premium lager, demonstrating soft, satisfying flavours with a deft touch. The brewery has a firm grip on this challenging style to brew.

And I am happy to report I found no slippage in the quality. Clearly Molson, for now, has kept their mitts off the brewing operations. And for that all of us can be thankful, because if it ain't broke, don't fix it. And there is nothing wrong with Creemore. I think I'll be buying another six pack soon. ▼

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It takes a Village

Edmonton's original Indian restaurant
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CHRISTOPHER THRALL / christopher@vuwweekly.com

Back in 1982, Harmeet Kapur was driving a cab when he agreed to become a silent partner in one of the strangest concepts to ever hit the Edmonton culinary scene: an Indian restaurant.

A year later, he bought the failing Asian Village for \$1 and renamed it. His mother, Surjit, ran the kitchen and he managed the rest. Since then, the **New Asian Village** has grown into a legend, adored by regulars across Edmonton and around the world, with four locations in Edmonton and two more opening soon.

Monica Levelle, Kapur's eldest daughter and Executive Potato and Onion Peeler in the original restaurant, now runs the luxurious Saskatchewan Drive location overlooking the river valley. She remembers the first location, south of Whyte Avenue on 104th Street, which opened when she was eight, as well as their brief time across the street from the Old Strathcona Farmers' Market in the early 1990s. Harmeet, his mother, his wife and his three daughters all worked in the restaurant. However, the central location is where it all came together.

"I hear all the time how everyone benchmarks our food for what Indian food should taste like," Levelle laughs. "I understand it, of course, since the butter chicken is our signature dish and I even have the original chef living upstairs!" When she talks about the other locations, however, a little sibling rivalry creeps into her voice.

In 1996, second daughter Sonia saw a cute guy, Ramesh Devangodi, working in the New Asian Village kitchen. She told her mom, "I'm going to marry that guy." She was right.



CHAINS
CHAIN GANG
NEW ASIAN VILLAGE

Within eight years, the couple opened up the second New Asian Village on the west end and the cute guy had become executive chef of the fledgling chain. In the last few months, the pair also opened a Manning Crossing New Asian Village in the northeast.

Two years ago, the youngest daughter finally realized her own dream. Veronica and her husband, Bobby Bhullar, opened a south side New Asian Village in the fiercely competitive 34th Avenue area.

"That is by far our busiest location," admits Levelle. "It was the right time and the right place for the south side and, for the first time, we are seeing a lot of support from the Indian community." Unfortunately, the idea of fine dining from an à la carte menu of dishes they could make at home never appealed to the older Indo-Canadian generation. However, according to

Levelle, the younger generation can't cook and they bring their parents to the buffet. They usually come back.

LEVELLE MENTIONS that inexpensive buffet and a new Bikaner line of low-sugar and low-fat Indian confections as very popular draws. In response to this popularity on the south side, Bhullar has just negotiated the lease for another space in the area.

As for Levelle, she obviously believes that a rolling pakora gathers no cardamom. Even as she manages the original location so dear to our hearts, she is taking on new opportunities.

In order to help manage her time and keep valuable employees in Alberta's red-hot labour market, she took the revolutionary step of offering profit-sharing to her already fiercely loyal back-of-house staff. While she negotiates an \$850 000 renovation of the Strathcona Drive site, she signed a lease for a New Asian Village in Sherwood Park. She is outfitting a mobile New Asian Village to visit downtown office blocks over the lunch hour. She works part time for CUPE 3911, in the field of Human Resources where she earned her degree, and raises two small children in whatever minutes she has left in a day. If it was n't obvious, the Kapurs were raised with a serious work ethic.

Even as patriarch Harmeet drops casual mentions of his retirement, his girls know better. Levelle says that it will never happen. "He lies about wanting to retire," she says, "but his heart is in this." She says he has talked about moving to Calgary and opening a New Asian Village there.

Harmeet can still be regularly found in his beloved original location, welcoming old friends and new, buying people beers from the massive selection of 250 labels. He has stepped back from the daily decisions that must be made in the restaurants that bear his name, but Monica Levelle insists that everyone knows whose restaurants these are.

"Without him, I wouldn't have this place—none of us would," she says fondly. "I know that, and I respect him for what he has built."

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A Golden Boy grows up

Ronnie Burkett isn't Billy Twinkle, but he knows how he feels

DAVID BERRY / david@vueweekly.com

It was six years into the eight-year-in-the-making *Billy Twinkle: Requiem for a Golden Boy* that Ronnie Burkett realized he was heading down the wrong path. The Canadian marionette master, who's premiering his work at the Citadel for the first time ever, had been kicking around a story where he played a puppeteer returning to the puppet festival and surveying his life. There was going to be Burkett in multiple roles; Burkett taking on different styles of puppeteering, inhabiting the diverse assortment of artists at the festival; it was going to be brilliant. And then he thought about it some more.

"Something occurred to me: I realized that it was a classic 'this is my life' thing, and I just went, 'Ugh. I really don't want to do that,'" Burkett says with a characteristic cackle. "My life just isn't that interesting, and there are a lot of shows like that out there already."

So it was back to the drawing board, or at least the tweaking board. The idea morphed into the story of an aging puppeteer who plies his cabaret act on a cruise ship, until an untimely outburst at one of the braying, rotund audience members gets him canned. Taking stock of his life and deciding he's had enough, he prepares himself for a watery end, only to be interrupted by the sock-puppet spirit of his former mentor, who takes Billy through his history as a puppeteer in the hopes of rekindling his original love. It's a little bit *A Wonderful Life*, viewed through the filter of Burkett, which is to say it's a world where meek sentimentality and bitchy one-liners mingle with the help of Burkett's nimble fingers.

But though it remains about a puppeteer, and Burkett has even snuck in a few references to his own life—like Burkett, Twinkle is a small-town prairie boy who heads off to Michigan to get his first exposure to the puppet world—Burkett is resolute that Twinkle is not some fig-leaved version of himself.

"The point of fiction is that you take some truth and some touchstones from your life and then you mix it up with a whole cauldron of bullshit," says Burkett, again displaying his contagious laugh. "That was certainly the case in other plays, and I've never felt compelled or felt it was interesting to tell what was truth and what was fiction. I've put a few touchstones of my own, but there are also bits from people I



PREVIEW

THU, OCT 23 - SUN, NOV 3

BILLY TWINKLE: REQUIEM FOR A GOLDEN BOY

CREATED AND PERFORMED BY RONNIE BURKETT
CITADEL RICE THEATRE (9820 - 101 A AVE)
\$40 - \$85

talked to our stories I've heard, and just made up stuff. It was a good hook for the story for me, though: Billy wasn't from Medicine Hat, but he is from Moose Jaw, so there's not much difference there."

AS MUCH AS it's true in the literal sense, it would probably also be more metaphorically accurate to say that all of the characters in *Golden Boy* are Burkett in some way. Two of the most important are Sid Diamond, the aforementioned mentor, and the avant-garde Benji, a childhood friend of Billy's who pushes the boundaries of theatre, in contrast to Billy's traditional act. It's very easy to see a parallel between Benji and Burkett, who early in his career started pushing the boundaries of puppetry, but Burkett also says he's coming to understand the mentor character more as he approaches that kind of position himself, away from being the bad boy of puppetry and into being one of its accomplished old guard.

"Thank goodness I did the pieces that I did early on, when I was of the age to do *Tinka* and *Street of Blood*," says Burkett. "I think to do that kind of work takes a kind of audacity that comes with being younger. *Tinka* and

Street of Blood, certainly, without diminishing them, were really kind of idealistic and angry, in the best possible way. But Benji and Billy and Sid Diamond are all different parts of me. I've been Benji, I was trained by all the Sids, and I was able to give them all a certain kind of authenticity."

As could be expected, though, it does seem like Burkett identifies most with Billy, and not just because the feeling of being adrift is one we all go through. Though Burkett insists that he has the same passion for puppeteering that he's always had, he is certainly coming to realize what it's like to no longer be a golden boy, and there's the sense that this play is, if not straightforward biography, something of a meditation by Burkett on his earlier years, as he moves confidently into his later ones.

"I am aware that I'm in that really mystical, funny age where one becomes invisible. It is a youth culture, and certainly in arts and entertainment, it's more than ever the need for the next thing: who's going to kick that guy off his throne, who's the new punk kid?" he says. "But the difference between me and Billy is, I honestly feel like I'm just starting. There are so many things I want to do, so many places I want to take my work, geographically and philosophically. The interest and the excitement has not waned. I mean, I know how to build puppets, I know how to tour, I know how to stand on stage; now it's really just a time of ideas, and that's an exciting place to be." ▼

Golden tongued

Inferno soars, *Factory* falters in Sharplin double bill

PAUL BLINOV / blinov@vueweekly.com

For his contribution to the Indie5 season, Scott Sharplin's combined a pair of self-penned one-act plays to examine the ideas of reality and truth through opposing lenses. Both hold their own as stand-alones, though they mesh nicely together in dissecting the idea: Sharplin's more than capable of taking either a dark or irreverent look at the same issue, though he only hits solid gold with the first of them, the creepy, excellent *Inferno Sonata*.

Sharplin is already onstage when we enter the theatre, brooding, pondering, looking down and contemplating his bandaged hands and ready to start *Inferno Sonata* along its twisting course. He's playing gloomy playwright-turned-scientist August Strindberg, and has assembled us "learn-ed folk" to prove his success in the field of alchemy: he's made gold, he claims, but his account of the experience holds less shimmer than sinister. It plays out like the diary of a madman, or one well along that path; the way he shrugs off our disbelief, and calls the Midas touch not tall tale but "alchemical perfection," sets the tone for his fascinating, fantasy-bound character.

Sharplin presents Strindberg's perturbed mind with a twisted sense of arrogance and pride for his task. His Strindberg has a distinct, educated vocabulary to present his intellectual observations with authority, and the emotional heart of a frail, tortured artist desperate for success in some segment of his life.

Instead, we see him curse at the impossibility of his work, wail for his distant, separated wife and daughter, and utter curses at the success of his rival Henrik Ibsen, (usually referred to as "the Norwegian," with bitter emphasis) who he believes to be sabotaging his every move.

That lattermost paranoia injects a strange humour into the whole show. The same goes for some of Strindberg's more ridiculous outbursts, as Sharplin's particularly good at playing the quick emotional changes, ripping between Strindberg's highly combustible moments and the more dignified, controlled persona he tries to present with ease and believability.

Then there's unexpected little perks, like the wondrous dioramas that lie behind each of the three ominous cloths at the back. The light design is complementary, which

REVIEW

UNTIL SAT, OCT 26 (8 PM)

INFERNO SONATA/ TRUTH FACTORY

WRITTEN BY SCOTT SHARPLIN
DIRECTED BY RYAN HUGHES, JANINE HODDER
STARRING SCOTT SHARPLIN, RYAN HUGHES, CODY PORTER
CATALYST THEATRE (8529 GATEWAY BLVD)
\$12 - \$14

gives some extra fire to already bubbling scenes. *Inferno Sonata*'s a slow-burn, but a satisfying one.

THE EVENING'S second offering, *Truth Factory*, seems to waver in its writing a little more than *Inferno*'s tight script, which just spent a summer cutting its teeth at various Fringes. But it's a decent premise and a quick, punchy comedy that, like *Inferno*, skews itself towards madness.

Truth Factory aligns us with the two lugs responsible for the stories at a Weekly-World News-style rag. It's fun to watch them set an egg timer and brainstorm headlines, riffing back and forth on absurd, some of which seem pretty familiar. Even their weirder ideas that eventually fizzle out on—"Satan! Satan's Location! Satan's Forwarding Address Satan's Junkmail?"—are entertaining to follow, and Sharplin's script is peppered with fantastic turns of phrase like, "Reality is gullible." Isn't it?

On opening night, actors Ryan Hughes and Cody Porter seemed a little wobbly on some of the quicker banter—first night jitters, maybe?—but were otherwise a well-matched duo. Hughes gets most of the fun, a boastful guy who's always *this* close to a promotion and sculpting his lunch into pricey high art. But Porter does well with the straightman hand he's dealt, and together, they make for entertaining back-and-forths as the pair bickers about adding even a morsel of truth to their articles. Which, ultimately, they don't need to worry about, as their headlines start to invade reality.

Sadly, that's also where the script seems to lose its grip. Past a certain point, *Truth Factory* forgoes its descent into madness for a straight plunge, forgoing some necessary dramatic build in its sprint to a mad-cap climax. It feels like a rushed ending to an evening of otherwise well-executed speculation. Reality is gullible, but sometimes it needs a little pacing to suspend its disbelief. ▼

ARTS

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By Judith Thompson



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I'm sailing away

EO brings back Wagner's *Dutchman*

by David Byrne / david@vancouverweekly.com

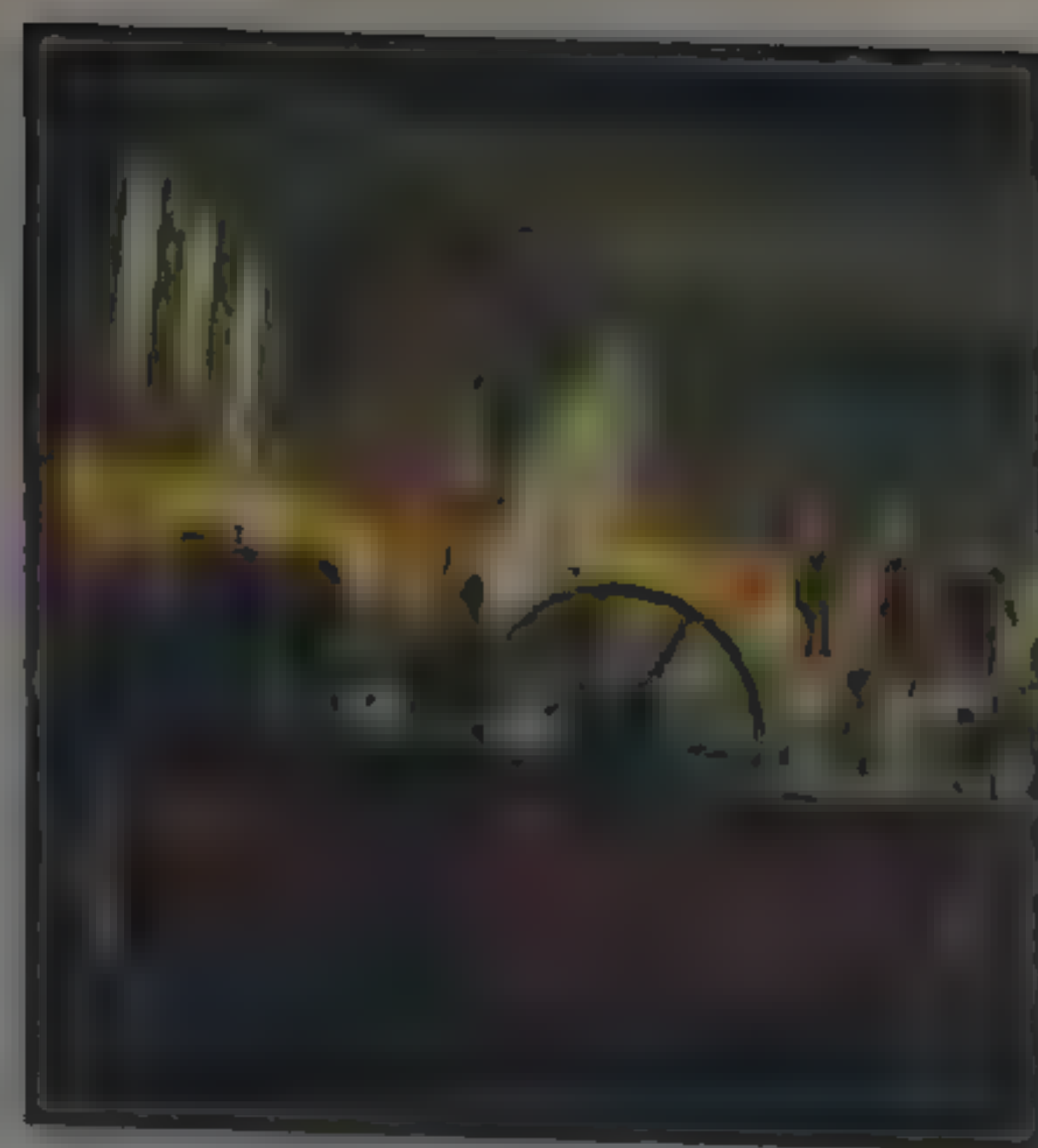
I think my favourite quote from my entire time in Edmonton is from a nice lady who came up to me after *Bluebeard/Erwartung*, "says Edmonton Opera's Artistic Director Brian Deedrick with a kind of trickster's slyness. "She said, 'I want to tell you that I really, really enjoyed the show, and please don't do anything like it ever again.'"

The boisterous laugh Deedrick gives off after the fact is some indication of how proud he is of his esoteric (and critically lauded) 2006 production of the pair of melancholy opéras, as well as how excited he is for a similar kind of take on EO's 2008/09 season opener, Wagner's *The Flying*

OPERA

SAT, OCT 25, TUE, OCT 28 & FRI, OCT 31 (7:30 PM)
THE FLYING DUTCHMAN
WRITTEN BY RICHARD WAGNER
DIRECTED BY BRIAN DEEDRICK
CONDUCTED BY JOHN KEENAN
STARRING JASON HOWARD, SUSAN MARIE PIERSON
JUBILEE AUDITORIUM (11455-87 AVE), \$25-\$150

Dutchman. Reuniting Deedrick with Jason Howard and Susan Marie Pierson, *Dutchman* excites Deedrick for reasons beyond the fact he's planning on bringing the kind of untraditional though thoroughly exhilarating presentation to another classic: it was the opera that first introduced him to Wagner, and though he admits he doesn't have much personal sympa-



thy towards the man—"He's just an odious man. I think he's the kind of person you just want to beat with a sock full of manure," Deedrick explains with another full laugh—he finds Wagner's work absolutely enthralling, from its big, tragic themes to its "earworm" leitmotifs.

"I first saw it about 12 years ago, and I was a Wagner neophyte," Deedrick explains. "But I was just blown away by the hypnotic power of

his music: I know this even better from having worked on it, but he's the kind of artist where you need to put on the radio when you're going to bed, or you'll just end up with one of his phrases stuck in your head and you'll never get to sleep.

"And [*Dutchman*] is an extraordinary piece," he adds effusively. "It's really his first masterpiece, when he really starts to find his own voice, and he starts dealing with those legendary and iconic figures he would explore in the Ring cycle, and gets into his big themes of redemption and eternal love. And it really just sails right by: people hear Wagner and they think about those four, five, six hour marathons, but this is just two hours and 45 minutes."

REGARDLESS, Deedrick is aware of the demands that even shorter Wagner can put on a viewer, especially with his interpretation. To that end, he's especially excited to get a chance to work with Howard and Pierson, who seem to have an uncanny ability to pick up on his wavelength and pre-

ent it to audiences in a powerful way.

"You can't be an artist of that calibre without being something of an amateur psychologist, and both of them bring so much to the roles," he explains. "Like *Bluebeard*, this isn't going to be a traditional romantic interpretation, and with such a big chorus—there's 51 people—the sort of centrifugal and centripetal force that they create is really important for—and I swear this is the last nautical metaphor I'll use today—putting every one on the boat. If you don't have that the life can't start or get sucked out of a production on this scale."

And make no mistake, Deedrick is demanding an awful lot of life out of the show. Like *Bluebeard/Erwartung*, he wants this to be something that the audience very much has to engage with, whatever their final thoughts.

This isn't going to be the kind of light evening's entertainment where you can just sit back and take it in, Deedrick says with a very tan, gleeful. "This is going to grab you by the throat." ▽

The horror of 'Horla'

BOOKS HOPSCOTCH

JOSEF BRADON
hopscotch@vancouverweekly.com

I'd happened upon a dog-eared copy of his collected stories while staying alone for a few days in this sort-of cottage belonging to the father of a friend, a little place in the Rockies. This was years ago and I recall knowing next to nothing about Guy de Maupassant, really, though some sliver of a memory told me "Le Horla" was supposed to be something special. I cooked up some coffee, rubbed my knees to get warm, nestled by a foggy widow in the kitchen, figuring I'd kill a little time with some light reading. I didn't figure on being unshakably creeped out. Or on the story being so deliciously wrought.

It seems Maupassant's not read so much these days, at least in English. I don't know his novels, but his stories are marvelous. I've been reacquainting myself with several of them, autumn being the time of year I habitually set aside for reading anything that might raise the little back-of-the-neck hairs, which often winds up being something from the early 1900s, that century haunted by the clash of scientific discovery and persistent folklore, by anxieties drawn from exploration, colonialism and industrialization. Several of Maupassant's best stories are sly examinations of class insecurity; some, like the marvelous "Tellier House" or "Mademoiselle Fifi," focus specifically on the fortunes of wily prostitutes. Relatively few could be considered horror in the strictest sense, and those that come closest are relentlessly ambiguous with regards to the supernatural—yet the very particular breed of unease in which they trade functions as a sort of bridge between Poe and Paul Bowles, while exhibiting a flair for economy that looks forward to Hemingway.

"The Hand" is a terrific example of Maupassant's deft managing of the short, sharp macabre, one of those tales relayed by a party with only limited knowledge of what truly passed. A magistrate promises a small

audience of women his memory of "a case that truly seemed to verge on fantasy," involving an Englishman residing in a Corsican town, a place teeming with legends of violent vendettas. The Englishman possesses an impressive collection of trophies from his travels to exotic lands, among them a human hand, shackled at the wrist, which belonged to an American, the Englishman's "worst enemy." Things get especially interesting when the Englishman is mysteriously murdered, and I love the way Maupassant has his otherwise very orderly narrator stop in the midst of describing a crime scene to conspicuously note that the culprit was never found. A finger, however, eventually is. I won't tell you where.

"The Inn" was supposedly a big influence on Stephen King's *The Shinning*, though its narrative simplicity and formal elegance could have just as easily informed countless subsequent stories of cabin fever. It concerns a pair of guides looking after an inn nestled in "those bare and rocky gorges that cut through white mountain peaks," a place that serves as refuge for travellers going through the Gemini Pass. As the story begins, the guides are escorting their summer guests down the mountain on the eve of winter, when the inn becomes a "snowy prison" and the area impassable. Ulrich, the younger of the guides, is heartsick for one of the daughters of the departing family, and Maupassant, in spare language, vividly evokes the ache felt as the desired girl carries on past the point where the guides must turn back, disappearing into the distant valley that will soon be erased under a blanket of white.

But the pain of the girl's absence felt by Ulrich will eventually be replaced by his panic over the absence of Gaspard, his elder co-worker and sole companion for the six-month-long off-season, aside from their dog. With Gaspard's disappearance, paranoia replaces longing, rising like a presence within the "death-like hush of the sleeping mountains." Maupassant traces Ulrich's growing worries in prose that keeps within the constraints of reportage, always cool and detached, the antithesis of

the histrionics that can make the work of HP Lovecraft, for one, hard to take.

ODDLY ENOUGH, Lovecraft cited "Le Horla" as a source of inspiration for his own "The Call of Cthulhu," though whatever tonal resemblance they share might be explained by the fact that "Horla" is written in the first-person as a journal, allowing Maupassant to indulge in flights of subjective inner turmoil on behalf of his lonesome, deeply troubled protagonist. Maupassant's prose is by nature not overtly poetic, yet there's much poetry in his looping of images which shift in meaning upon return, as is the case with the ship from Brazil sailing down the Seine. When first it appears our protagonist is so inexplicably moved by its grace that he salutes it. By the time it returns, this ship will become a harbinger of catastrophic malaise.

The journal keeper is tormented by a heightened awareness of the invisible influences at work in the world, phenomena that seems to him sufficiently grounded in both science and common sense. His sleep is gradually invaded by the sensation of some succubus-like presence, what would today be likely diagnosed as the effects of parasomnia. He sees containers of water and milk mysteriously drained every night. At one point he witnesses the power of hypnosis on a relative and is overcome with terror of the psyche's frailty, all the more reason to feel susceptible to the elusive force he characterizes as spying, watching, penetrating and dominating. He's spiraling into some sort of psychologically induced abyss, clearly, yet this doesn't mean that the entity won't succeed in corrupting and finally ruining him.

"Solitude is certainly dangerous for active intellects," the protagonist of "Le Horla" tells us, which may remind us of the inherent solitude of the writer. At one point the protagonist complains about having never read anything that might describe his condition—but how did Maupassant feel toward the end of his life, shortened by syphilis and its accompanying madness, knowing that not only had he read about such conditions but actually wrote about them? Some say he was already going mad when he wrote "Le Horla." He died, a year after attempting suicide, on June 6, 1893. He was 42. ▽

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Do you sea?

Nature sits uneasily amongst Jonsson's ceramic anemone at Harcourt

SARAH HAMILTON / hamilton@vuwweekly.com

Since the Industrial Revolution, our collective preoccupation with our growing estrangement from nature in the name of progress has been articulated in art movements like Art Nouveau, which employed organic-based patterns in art and design items, and the Arts and Crafts Movement, which used organic materials, combined with modern inventions such as steel to create modern furniture and architectural designs. More recently, this estrangement has been articulated by journalist Richard Luov as "nature deficit disorder," at which point interaction with nature is no longer a desire, but a basic human need.

Stephanie Jonsson contributes to this ongoing unconscious fixation in her residency exhibition at Harcourt House, *Urban Organic Absurdity*, which is "a reaction to the absence of nature in our increasingly urban culture." But more so, it addresses the absurdity of this reaction through industrial techniques and materials used in compensating for this lack within our visual environment.

VIZ ARTS

UNTIL SAT, NOV 15
**URBAN ORGANIC
ABSURDITY**
BY STEPHANIE JONSSON
HARCOURT HOUSE (10215 - 112 ST)

The installation gives the viewer a sense of being underwater, though Jonsson is clear that her references to the sea are metaphoric, but not overt. The sea-green walls are decorated with curlicues and towering sea grass, providing continuity as you float from work to work. Jonsson's anemone-shaped sculptures are delicately crafted ceramics that line the room on islands of carpet and fabric. In the centre of the room, a five-foot sculpture of steel, ceramic and fabric looms, poised on four thin legs. Jonsson's careful attention to detail within the sculptures is apparent: she balances her interest in visual texture between her fragile-looking ceramics and her stiff fabrics. Each anemone has a delicately moulded centre and the shapes on the walls are echoed in the fabric sculptures and the stencilling on the fabric bases. For all this,

however, overtones of industrialization emerge from her installation.

CONSISTENT WITH HER INTEREST in industrial production, Jonsson employed an assembly line of friends and colleagues to assist in putting together part of the exhibition. All of Jonsson's pieces are constructed from manufactured materials—ceramic, steel, PL 400 adhesive, glass, foam insulation and synthetic fabric. As attractive as the installation is, it is also absurd, repulsive and post-apocalyptic in its overly complicated simulation of nature's elegant design.

The seams of construction are visible in each piece, a key characteristic of many mass-produced consumer goods which lack the craftsmanship of individually hand-wrought items. It is clear where Jonsson has bound pieces of sculpture together, inked

lines of the patterns she has cut and glued sculptures to mirrors. In one sculpture in the centre of the room, duct tape binds the fabric tentacles to the steel. In other areas, however, Jonsson's work is less transparent; the method she uses to keep her ceramic sculptures standing firmly on the floor are concealed, and the stability of her centrepiece sculpture seems enticingly delicate.

For Jonsson, transparency in her installation is essential. It is easy to become immersed in this "sea," and these seams bring you out of the illusion. Though cohesive with modern design, Jonsson challenges the visual appeal of her installation by questioning what "motivations drive the human attraction to seemingly 'natural' mass-produced products or images that capitalize on our need to re-connect with nature."

Jonsson's aptitude for creating an environment at once enchanting and threatening shows skill beyond her focus on sculpture and textile work, and it will be interesting to see if she pushes her interest in mixed media and installation further, expanding and refining her technical skills and pushing her themes and craft to their limits. Jonsson broaches ideas in her work that are not only grounded in history, but are contemporary preoccupations, manifested in a collective cultural interest in such documentaries as *Planet Earth* and *Blue Planet*. She could have fallen into an altruistic trap, but restrains from stating the obvious. Drawing on contemporary design aesthetic and a paradoxical medium, Jonsson urges her audience to consider what unconsciously draws us to "natural" beauty and the consequences of that allure. ▽

Caring is creepy

Klosterman turns his talents to fiction

BRYAN BIRTLES / bryan@vuwweekly.com

I don't know if Chuck Klosterman is the kind of guy you would want to be friends with. He seems incredibly good at manipulating people, making them care about something so much and then blowing all the things he said about them away like the little puff of smoke that remains when a match goes out. It's like, if you were at a party with him, and you said you thought the Ku Klux Klan was a bad organization, Klosterman would be able to convince you that they weren't so bad. Then at the end of the night he would turn to you and say, "Hey, let's not forget what a bunch of racist, bigoted, baby eaters they are, though," and you wouldn't know what to believe.

That's what his writing is like. It's an amazing ability that the man has, to make you care about things that you ought not to. Like his essays on *Saved by the Bell* and Billy Joel, in Klosterman's first novel, *Downtown Owl*, readers are introduced to characters who are outwardly entirely plain, but Klosterman makes them interesting by giving them inner lives that are tumultuous and full of self-doubt and moments of questioning—essentially, all of his characters suffer

BOOKS

DOWNTOWN OWL
BY CHUCK KLOSTERMAN
SCRIBNER, 275 PP, \$28

from the same existential ennui, but can't or don't communicate it to each other, and therefore seem to be the loneliest people in the world.

Julia Rabia is a new teacher who never ever saw herself in a small town like Owl, North Dakota, but ends up there anyways and drinks her sorrows away. Mitch Hrlicka is a high school athlete who is terrible at athletics, doesn't like music, and seems to lack an active interest in anything. His inner monologue consists almost solely of violent thoughts about killing his football coach. All of the characters are like this—simply plodding along on a life path they never chose, and they don't seem to dream about getting out. But Klosterman, somehow, makes you care about them.

EVERYONE IN OWL knows about everyone but doesn't necessarily know them, but readers are let into their world through the different chapters, which come from various

viewpoints, but are spoken through a detached, omnipotent narrator. This detachment could be on purpose, a Brechtian device employed by Klosterman, but it takes away from the empathy built up in the reader—a small quibble, and something that you get used to, but it does take away from what seems to be the purpose of the story.

(Spoiler alert) And then, after building his characters up so meticulously, after making you care about these people that are barely worth your time, that haven't done anything particularly notable but have become private celebrities, Klosterman kills them. After a fictional book about a fictional town, Klosterman has his characters deal with a very real blizzard that swept ferociously across North Dakota in 1984. It's a heavy-handed ending, and feels a bit forced, but ultimately the book works because of Klosterman's skill at unseating the reader's assumptions and depositing new feelings in their place. Even though it seems a bit tacked on, and even though it felt like something was coming, the deaths still come as somewhat of a shock. Ultimately this book would be terrible if not for Klosterman's incredible skill—and that's not a backhanded compliment, either. Klosterman's ability to take normal people and raise them to the heights that he does and then bring it all down in a way that doesn't feel too stunted is absolutely amazing. ▽



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Nights of the living Deadmonton

Horror fest reclaims the name for its own nefarious purposes

BY DAVID BERRY / david@vnewweekly.com
Like the most really great ideas, the name of the **Deadmonton Horror Film Festival** owes its roots to a mixture of ingenuity and serendipity. Sprouting from the roots of the Return to Odd marathon screenings put on by the departed video store (since re-named the Lobby, the owner of which, Kevin Martin, has a hand in running the current incarnation of the festival), as Deadmonton co-curator and co-head organizer Derek Clayton explains, they had to improvise when they weren't able to contact Oddity's original owner about using the established brand.

"It all came about because his e-mail account changed, and we couldn't get ahold of him," says Clayton casually. "At that point, we decided we were going to have to rename it. So we decided to go with Deadmonton because we thought it might be nice to take the name back from the naysayers, and what better way to do that than with a horror festival? Shortly after that, Chris [the former owner] actually did finally get ahold of us, and he said, 'You know, you could have used the name,' but we figured it was a good time to rebrand it anyway."

And a fairly good rebrand, to boot. Clayton and fellow curator/organizer Matt Acosta managed to be at the



HORROR

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forefront of a wave of Edmontonians who were looking to turn the city's most notorious nickname into a mark of pride. Though it normally alludes to city streets so sparse that a zombie infestation would count as a major improvement in terms of foot traffic, it just happens to be an ideal moniker for a festival that leans towards the scary, gory and macabre.

"It's a slur against the city, but

when you're doing a horror film festival, it's really the perfect name," points out Clayton, who adds that he's got the international consensus to back him up on that fact. "It's actually garnered us international attention—I've seen postings on websites all over the world about the movies and the name of the festival."

"And that's the best way to turn the insult around, to take it back: we're garnering international attention for being a centre of something," he continues. "We've had a lot of people saying things like, 'Wow, look at the lineup those Deadmonton guys have got.' We'd really like it if we could put Edmonton on the map for the genre, and for horror culture in general."

IF THAT IS INDEED their goal, they've gotten off to a fabulous start: the festival itself, which runs over the weekend, has pulled in a number of prestigious premieres and revivals that are well worth buzzing about. The biggest is certainly *My Name is Bruce*, a film written by and starring the *Evil Dead* legend as a washed-up version of himself who gets called on to fight a real life monster in Oregon, and which Deadmonton will be showing in its Canadian premiere (and there's obviously a market: Saturday night's showings are already sold out on the strength of its anchor slot). They scored another big Canadian

premiere with *Midnight Movie*, a slasher-flick-come-to-life film that has been garnering rave reviews wherever its shown.

On the revival side of things, they've managed to track down a 35 mm print of *Phantasm*, which will show on the big screen in Edmonton for the first time since its release in 1979, and *Night of the Creeps*, a film Clayton is particularly excited about, as it doesn't even yet have a DVD release, making its Friday screening one of the few ways horror fans can see it.

Of course, the quality of films means nothing without an audience,

but Clayton feels confident that Edmonton is ripe for horror, from our burgeoning metal and psychobilly scenes to our well-established character.

"It's not a pretentious city, and a lot of the more pretentious elements tend to eschew the horror film," Clayton says. "We were at another screening—I won't say what festival it was—but every horror film, they called a 'psychological thriller.' And we called that they were going to do that, because 'horror' is almost a dirty word. But we're not a pretentious city we know what horror is and we like horror movies." ▽

Celebrity skin

FLICKS DVDetective

DAVID BERRY
dvdetective@vnewweekly.com

As much because it's the first grand civilization to have such readily available means of mass communication as anything, celebrity culture is central to the American experience, really to this point at a disturbing level. The explosion of celebrity infotainment is the most recent development, but it's really just the logical endpoint of an obsession that stretches back to pin-up girls and matinee idols.

Two films recently released on DVD (and which missed Edmonton during their limited release) both examine some degree of the American celebrity obsession, albeit in entirely different ways, and with entirely different tones. Still, the fact that such

wildly disparate films find a tangent in obsession with celebrity says something about what it means to America.

The first, and by far the more interesting, is Harmony Korine's *Mister Lonely*, out on a fittingly simple release from IFC. Korine is known as something of a provocateur, but *Lonely* is a pretty large departure from the often biting tone of *Gummo* or *Julien Donkey-Boy*, an almost meditative take from a director that leans more to the electric. It follows Michael Jackson (Diego Luna), a Michael Jackson impersonator who's convinced by a Marilyn Monroe (Samantha Morton) to come live with her in a celebrity-impersonation commune, and the slow apocalypse of the commune that follows, a descent that's only partially connected.

One of the film's flaws—although it could probably also count as one of its charms, depending on how you're

wired—is the relentless quirk which takes up much of the first half. Korine takes his time introducing you to the characters who populate the commune—Marilyn's domineering husband Charlie Chaplin, their daughter Shirley Temple, a foul-mouthed Abe Lincoln, a thoughtful Buckwheat, as well as Sammy Davis Jr, the Pope, the Queen, the Three Stooges, Madonna, James Dean and Little Red Riding Hood—but for the most part it's little more than reveling in oddity: there are feints towards Michael looking for something bigger, finding some connection with these people who are more comfortable as other people, but for about 45 minutes or so Korine seems content to just celebrate how bizarre the situation is.

Things take a darker turn when Charlie starts to get jealous of the attention Marilyn pays Michael, and it's here that the film starts to worm its way under the skin, due in no small part to Korine's talent with small moments. There's a particularly sub-

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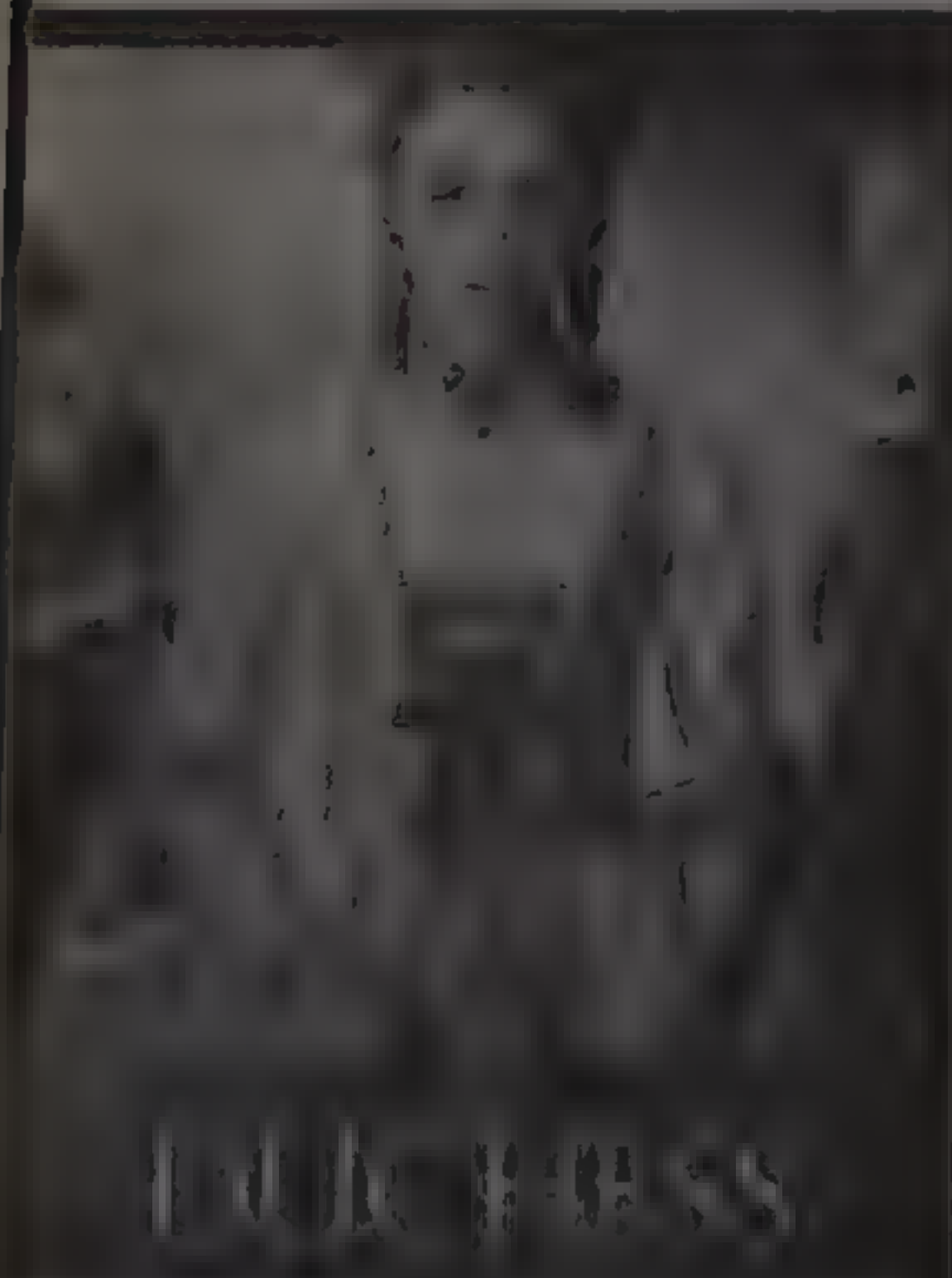
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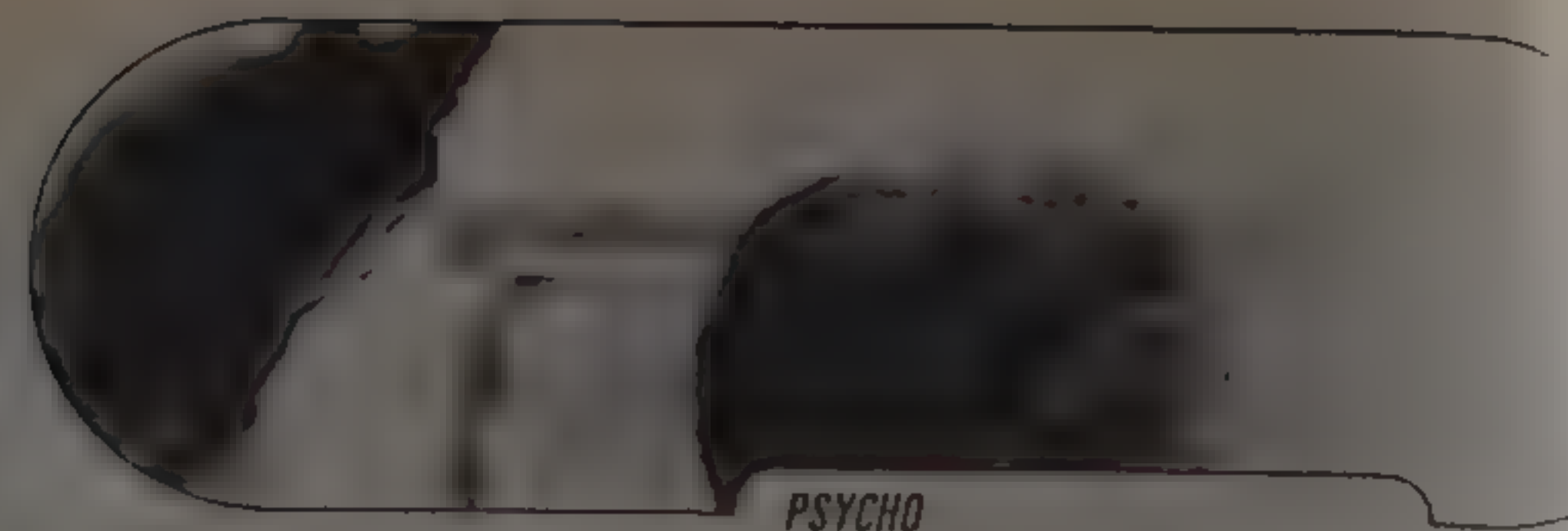
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QUICK REVIEWS

FILM CAPSULES



PSYCHO



MAX PAYNE

NOW PLAYING

MAX PAYNE

DIRECTED BY JOHN MOORE

SCREENPLAY BY RANDI MOORE, SAM LAKE

STARRING MARK WAHLBERG, MILA KUNIS, BEAU BRIDGES

★★

BRIAN GIBSON / brian@vuweekly.com

Max Payne seems to start where *The Bourne Ultimatum* ended, drifts into *Sin*

City territory, then slaloms between gritty action and comic-book noir before skidding out into overblown fantasy. It all begins in the wintry waters off New York, where Max (Mark Wahlberg) is sinking into cold oblivion, offering his philosophy on life just before he leaves it: "I believe in fear. I believe in death."

Death certainly believes in him, having taken the cop's young wife and their newborn from him when he came home to find them murdered. Now Payne shivers through cold cases among the slabs of file cabinets in a police backroom, still desperate to catch the one killer who got away that day. But when a woman he meets is murdered the next day, her sister (Mila Kunis) comes gunning for him. Soon after he's convinced her they're both looking for the same killer, Payne's ex-partner is dead and the cop finds himself frozen out by everyone except old friend BB (Beau Bridges, playing his initials), head of security at a pharmaceutical corporation.

Wahlberg flint-eyes his way through the noir, which seeps through in the coal-filtered shots of city streets in pounding rain or floating snow, a silhouette behind a frosted glass office door, and terse encounters in diners, back alleys or warehouses. There's a '70s-ish grit, though, too (*The French Connection*, *Dirty Harry*), from the man's K-car to a scene where Payne starts blasting down doors in a filthy subway men's room with his long-barreled, Magnum-style gun. His pain is even our gain when director John Moore cuts a scene where the cop's beaten up in black flashes of bare-consciousness and bursts of blood-red.

But the film's style starts to wane early on. The weak, stretched-out plotline is the most obvious giveaway that this is an adaptation of a video game. The whodunit is so obvious from the start (though the why is a bit interesting, injecting a little social criticism) that the script makes Payne seem like a moron for not adding up the clues earlier. But he's already hardened into an action figure, on a *Death Wish* as he seeks his *Righteous Kill*.

As the end nears, the pacing gets choppy. Director John Moore tries to fire up the atmosphere with some pointless bullet-time shots and his CGI trigger-finger goes a bit wild. The last part of the movie spirals into a zombie-ish climax with a hulking-mad Payne, hellbent on revenge, lurching on from one shoot down to another. And just before the end of this semi-noir, where window-dressing women are simply devils or angels, Kunis's underused, unexplained character is suddenly dropped. But by then, Max Payne lost that far more important sidekick, Minnie Pleasure.

ON DVD

PSYCHO

DIRECTED BY ALFRED HITCHCOCK

WRITTEN BY JOSEPH STEFANO

STARRING ANTHONY PERKINS, JANET LEIGH

★★★★★

JOSEF BRAUN / josef@vuweekly.com

It is one of those genuinely inexhaustible movies, and, though its violence pierces only more deeply with time, I find myself returning to it more than any other. *Psy*

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FILM AND VIDEO ARTS SOCIETY ALBERTA

newly released in a well-supplied special edition, has that crystalline character of something that yields to interpretation with every handling. It seduces, the staircase, the basement, the staircase, the basement—grow familiar, the relatively mundane moments grow in fascination. Alfred Hitchcock film not about a young couple, yet its morbid allure is

story? A decisive moment looms in the twisted love affair. He's been married, struggling and proud, imagines himself meagerly as monthly alimony are mailed off. She braces for hardship, offering to lick the wound. A client leaves a check at work a client leaves a check she's meant to deposit but it's in her pockets. She packs a suitcase to leave town. She comes upon a motel on a lonely road with an unworried, but still innocent-seeming man. He serves her sandwiches. His mother mutters curses in the background. She starts to wonder if she's a little crazy. Everyone goes a little crazy sometimes. I'm going to stay here on as though you've seen it. If you haven't, well, you're in for a treat.

The horizontal lines pushing across the screen during the opening credits seem a graphic preview to Norman's hand slapped over his mouth after "discovering" the bloodbath. Better yet, these lines resemble the viewer's hand closed over eyes that can't help but keep watching. *Psycho* is nothing if not an ocular web: the mere act of looking never feels so passive after *Psycho* but rather something imminently corruptible.

It was the sequence of Lila's looking that caught my attention most intensely during my last viewing. She enters Mother's room, sees the antiquated mirrors, dresses, the strange objects and, bizarrely, the impression of Mother's body on the bed. In Norman's room she sees the dolls, examines that untitled book we're never allowed to glimpse. Hitchcock keeps cutting between these objects and Lila's pointed gaze, reminding us how purposeful and consequential this activity of looking is. Reminding us, too, through relentlessly observed details, of the unnerving, seeming randomness of everything. If an individual death has seldom been so horrifyingly palpable as that of Marion's in *Psycho*, surely this is partly due to the terrifying randomness Hitchcock emphasizes, right down to the casting of a star in a potentially disposable role.

And what a strange, perfect star performance it is. Janet Leigh's so damn good in *Psycho* because she's as cagey as her adversary. Whether with her boyfriend or in the office, she's never quite penetrable—it's her eyes that remain remote. Other than occasional hints of panic, her eyes never betray her—until she meets Norman, and then they begin to soften. Norman, so eloquently embodied by Anthony Perkins, talks to Marion about "private traps" and here, in all its bravura, is the most poignant moment of connection between two people in the whole movie. Marion's still guarded, yet softened to the point where this young woman will actually cause her to decide to go back to Phoenix. But just as her private self becomes illuminated, she walks right into a different, unforeseeable sort of trap and moves straight into one of the most enduring evocations of sheer trauma in cinema history. **V**

FILM WEEKLY

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PASSCHENDAELE (14A gory scenes, coarse language)
Fri & Sat 7:00, 9:00; Sun-Thu 8:00

MAX PAYNE (14A violence)
Fri & Sat 7:00, 9:00; Sun-Thu 8:00

CINEMA CITY MOVIES 12

130 Ave 50 St, 780-472-9779

HOW TO LOSE FRIENDS & ALIENATE PEOPLE (14A coarse language)
Fri-Sat 1:25, 4:05, 6:55, 9:20, 11:50;
Sun-Thu 1:25, 4:05, 6:55, 9:20

DEATH RACE (14A gory scenes, coarse language, brutal violence)
Fri-Sat 1:50, 4:45, 7:25, 9:55, 12:15;
Sun-Thu 1:50, 4:45, 7:25, 9:55

THE HOUSE BUNNY (PG coarse language, not rec. for young children)
Fri-Thu 2:00, 7:35

STAR WARS: THE CLONE WARS (PG)
Fri-Thu 1:20, 4:10, 6:50

TROPIC THUNDER (14A coarse language, crude content)
Fri-Sat 1:45, 4:35, 7:10, 9:45, 12:05;
Sun-Thu 1:45, 4:35, 7:10, 9:45

PINEAPPLE EXPRESS (18A substance abuse)
Fri-Sat 4:25, 9:50, 12:10; Sun-Thu 4:25, 9:50

STEP BROTHERS (14A coarse language, not recommended for children, crude content)
Fri-Sat 1:35, 4:40, 7:15, 9:40, 12:00;
Sun-Thu 1:35, 4:40, 7:15, 9:40

THE DARK KNIGHT (PG violence, frightening scenes, not rec. for young children)
Fri-Sat 1:10, 2:30, 4:20, 6:30, 7:40, 9:50, 11:20; Sun-Thu 1:10, 2:30, 4:20, 6:30, 7:40, 9:50

MAMMA MIA! (PG)
Fri-Sat 1:40, 4:15, 7:05, 9:35, 11:55;
Sun-Thu 1:40, 4:15, 7:05, 9:35

HANCOCK (PG crude content, violence, coarse language)
Fri-Thu 2:05, 4:55, 7:30, 10:00

WALL-E (G)
Fri-Sat 1:30, 4:30, 7:00, 9:25, 11:40;
Sun-Thu 1:30, 4:30, 7:00, 9:25

GET SMART (PG violence, coarse language)
Fri-Sat 9:15, 11:30; Sun-Thu 9:15

KUNG FU PANDA (PG)
Fri-Sat 1:55, 4:50, 7:20, 9:30, 11:45;
Sun-Thu 1:55, 4:50, 7:20, 9:30

CINEPLEX ODEON NORTH

1120 12th Avenue, 780-92-2006

PRIDE AND GLORY (14A coarse language, violence, not recommended for children)
Fri-Thu 1:00, 4:00, 7:00, 10:00

HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL 3: SENIOR YEAR (G) no passes
Fri-Thu 12:00, 2:30, 5:10, 7:40, 10:20

SAW V (18A gory scenes, disturbing content)
Fri-Thu 12:50, 3:10, 5:30, 8:00, 10:35

PASSCHENDAELE (14A gory scenes, coarse language)
Fri-Mon, Wed-Thu 12:30, 3:20, 6:40, 9:30;
Tue 3:20, 6:40, 9:30; Star & Stroller screening Tue 1:00

MAX PAYNE (14A violence)
Fri-Thu 12:10, 2:50, 5:20, 7:45, 10:15

W. (PG coarse language)
Fri-Mon, Wed-Thu 12:40, 3:40, 6:50, 9:40; Tue 3:40, 6:50, 9:40; Star & Stroller screening Tue 1:00

SEX DRIVE (18A crude content, sexual content)
Fri-Thu 1:40, 4:45, 7:50, 10:25

THE SECRET LIFE OF BEES (PG coarse language, Not rec. for young children)
Fri-Thu 1:10, 3:50, 6:30, 9:15

QUARANTINE (18A gory scenes)

Fri-Thu 2:10, 4:50, 8:10, 10:30

BODY OF LIES (14A coarse language, brutal violence)
Fri-Thu 1:20, 4:10, 7:10, 10:05

BEVERLY HILLS CHIHUAHUA (G)
Fri-Thu 12:20, 2:40, 5:00, 7:15, 9:45

NICK AND NORAH'S INFINITE PLAYLIST (PG coarse language)
Fri-Thu 2:00, 4:30, 7:30, 9:50

NIGHTS IN RODANTHE (PG)
Fri-Tue, Thu 1:30, 4:20, 6:45, 9:10; Wed 1:30, 4:20, 9:10

EAGLE EYE (14A)
Fri-Thu 1:50, 4:40, 7:20, 10:10

BOWFIRE (STC) Wed 7:00

CINEPLEX ODEON SOUTH

1120 12th Avenue, 780-92-2006

PRIDE AND GLORY (14A coarse language, violence, not recommended for children)
Fri-Thu 12:30, 3:40, 7:20, 10:15

HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL 3: SENIOR YEAR (G) no passes
Fri-Thu 1:00, 4:00, 7:00, 9:45; Fri 12:05, 3:20, 6:30, 9:15; Sat-Thu 12:15, 3:20, 6:30, 9:15

SAW V (18A gory scenes, disturbing content)
Fri-Thu 1:45, 4:30, 8:00, 10:30

ROADSIDE ROMEO (HINDI W/E S.T.)
Fri-Thu 12:10, 2:30, 4:50, 7:10

PASSCHENDAELE (14A gory scenes, coarse language)
Fri-Thu 12:50, 3:50, 7:00, 9:50

MAX PAYNE (14A violence)
Fri-Tue, Thu 1:30, 4:20, 7:40, 9:30, 10:10; Wed 1:30, 4:20, 7:10, 9:30, 10:10

W. (PG coarse language)
Fri-Thu 12:40, 4:15, 7:10, 9:55

SEX DRIVE (18A crude content, sexual content)
Fri-Thu 1:50, 4:50, 7:40, 10:05

QUARANTINE (18A gory scenes)
Fri-Sun, Tue-Thu 1:10, 3:30, 7:50, 10:00; Mon 3:30, 7:50, 10:00

BODY OF LIES (14A coarse language, brutal violence)
Fri-Thu 1:15, 4:10, 7:10, 10:20

BEVERLY HILLS CHIHUAHUA (G)
Fri-Mon, Wed-Thu 12:20, 2:40, 5:00, 7:20, 9:40; Tue 5:00, 7:20, 9:40 Star & Stroller screening: Tue 1:00

NICK AND NORAH'S INFINITE PLAYLIST (PG coarse language)
Fri-Thu 1:15, 3:40, 6:40, 9:35

RELIGULOUS

(14A coarse language, mature themes)
Fri-Mon, Wed-Thu 3:45, 6:50, 9:20; Tue 6:50, 9:20 Star & Stroller screening Tue 1:00

EAGLE EYE (14A)
Fri-Thu 1:30, 4:20, 7:30, 10:25

THE DUCHESS (14A)
Fri-Mon, Wed-Thu 1:20; Tue 3:20

BURN AFTER READING (14A violence, coarse language)
Fri-Tue, Thu 1:40, 4:10, 6:40, 9:25; Wed 1:40, 4:10, 9:25

W. (PG coarse language)
Fri-Thu 12:35, 3:25, 6:40, 9:25

PASSCHENDAELE (14A gory scenes, coarse language)
Fri-Thu 1:15, 4:00, 6:30, 9:10

NICK AND NORAH'S INFINITE PLAYLIST (PG coarse language)

Fri-Sun-Wed 1:00, 3:50, 7:10, 9:30; Sat 7:10, 9:30; Thu 1:00, 3:50, 9:30

BODY OF LIES (14A coarse language, brutal violence)
Fri-Sat, Mon-Tue, Thu 12:55, 3:45, 6:35, 9:40; Sun 6:35, 9:40; Wed 12:55, 3:45, 6:35

THE SECRET LIFE OF BEES (PG coarse language, not rec. for young children)
Fri-Thu 1:10, 3:35, 7:15, 9:35

DON GIOVANNI - MOZART (OPERA Not Rated)
Sat-Sun 12:00

CLAREVIEW 10

4211-130 Ave, 780-472-7900

EAGLE EYE (14A)
Fri, Mon-Thu 4:10, 6:55, 9:35; Sat-Sun 1:25, 4:10, 6:55, 9:35

BEVERLY HILLS CHIHUAHUA (G)
Fri, Mon-Thu 4:30, 7:05, 9:25; Sat-Sun 1:40, 4:30, 7:05, 9:25

NICK AND NORAH'S INFINITE PLAYLIST (PG coarse language)
Fri-Mon-Thu 4:35, 6:50, 9:00; Sat-Sun 1:50, 4:35, 6:50, 9:00

BODY OF LIES (14A coarse language, brutal violence)
Fri-Thu 9:10

QUARANTINE (18A gory scenes)
Fri-Mon-Thu 4:50, 7:00, Sat-Sun 2:10, 4:50, 7:00

PASSCHENDAELE (14A gory scenes, coarse language)
Fri-Mon-Thu 4:00, 6:40, 9:30; Sat-Sun 1:20, 4:00, 6:40, 9:30

SEX DRIVE (18A crude content, sexual content)
Fri-Thu 4:20, 7:10, 9:40

MAX PAYNE (14A violence)
Fri-Mon-Thu 4:40, 7:20, 9:50; Sat-Sun 2:00, 4:40, 7:20, 9:50

HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL 3: SENIOR YEAR (G) no passes
Fri-Mon-Thu 4:15, 6:45, 9:15; Sat-Sun 1:30, 4:15, 6:45, 9:15

PRIDE AND GLORY (14A coarse language, violence, not recommended for children)
Fri-Mon-Thu 3:40, 6:30, 9:20, Sat-Sun 12:50, 3:40, 6:30, 9:20

SAW V (18A gory scenes, disturbing content)
Fri-Mon-Thu 4:25, 7:30, 9:45; Sat-Sun 1:45, 4:25, 7:30, 9:45

CITY OF EMBER (PG) Sat-Sun 1:10

DUGGAN CINEMA-CAMROSE

8000 Ave, Camrose, 780-92-2116

MAX PAYNE (14A violence)
Daily 7:15, 9:15; Sat & Sun 2:15

HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL 3 (G)
Daily 7:00, 9:10; Sat & Sun 2:00

BEVERLY HILLS CHIHUAHUA (G)
Daily 7:05, 9:05; Sat & Sun 2:05

SAW V (18A disturbing content, gory scenes)
Daily 7:20, 9:20; Sat & Sun 2:20

PASSCHENDAELE (14A gory scenes, coarse language)
Daily 7:10, 9:20; Sat & Sun 2:10

GALAXY-SHERWOOD PARK

8000 Ave, Sherwood Park, 780-92-2116

HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL 3: SENIOR YEAR (G) no passes
Fri-Sun 1:00, 4:00, 7:00, 9:50; Mon-Thu 7:00, 9:50

SAW V (18A gory scenes, disturbing content)
Fri-Sun 12:40, 4:40, 7:40, 10:20, Mon-Thu 7:40, 10:20

PASSCHENDAELE (14A gory scenes, coarse language)
Fri-Sun 12:30, 3:30, 7:10, 10:10; Mon-Thu 7:10, 10:10

MAX PAYNE (14A violence)
Fri-Sun 1:30, 4:30, 7:20, 10:00; Mon-Thu 7:20, 10:00

W. (PG coarse language)
Fri-Sun 12:00, 3:40, 6:50, 9:45; Mon-Thu 6:50, 9:45

SEX DRIVE (18A crude content, sexual content)
Fri-Sun 1:10, 4:10, 7:30, 10:15, Mon-Thu 7:30, 10:15

BODY OF LIES (14A coarse language, brutal violence)
Fri-Sun 12:20, 3:50, 6:45, 9:40; Mon-Thu 6:45, 9:40

BEVERLY HILLS CHIHUAHUA (G)
Fri-Sun 12:20, 4:15, 7:05, 9:30; Mon-Thu 7:05, 9:30

NICK AND NORAH'S INFINITE PLAYLIST (PG coarse language)
Fri-Sun 12:50, 4:15, 7:15, 9:35; Mon-Thu 7:15, 9:35

EAGLE EYE (14A)
Fri-Sun 12:10, 3:45, 6:40, 9:20; Mon-Thu 6:40, 9:20

GARNEAU

8112 130 St, 780-433-0728

HEROES (STC)
Nightly 7:00
Sat & Sun 2:00

ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW
Sat Oct 25th Midnight

GRANDIN THEATRE

Grandin Mall, Sir Winston Churchill Ave. St. Albert, 780-458-6022

DATE OF ISSUE ONLY

PASSCHENDAELE (14A gory scenes, coarse language)
Daily 12:45, 2:50, 5:00, 7:10, 9:20

MAX PAYNE (14A violence)
Daily 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30

SAW 5 (18A disturbing content, gory scenes)
Daily 1:20, 3:20, 5:20, 7:15, 9:15

BEVERLY HILLS CHIHUAHUA (G)
Daily 1:10, 3:00, 4:50, 6:45, 8:35

HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL 3 (G) no passes
Daily 1:00, 3:10, 5:15, 7:25, 9:25

LEPUC CINEMAS

100 Ave, 780-433-0728

MAX PAYNE (14A violence)
Daily 7:10, 9:35, Sat & Sun 1:10, 3:35

SEX DRIVE (18A sexual content, crude content)
Daily 7:05, 9:30; Sat & Sun 1:05, 3:30

PASSCHENDAELE (14A gory scenes, coarse language)
Daily 7:00, 9:25, Sat & Sun 1:00, 3:30

HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL 3 (G)
Daily 6:55, 9:20, Sat & Sun 12:55, 3:25

METRO CINEMA

8000 Ave, 780-433-0728

UNSUBTANTIAL REVENUE (PG coarse language)
Thu 7:00

DEADMONTON HORROR FILM FEST
Fri 7:00-11:45; Sat 5:45-1:00; Sun 2:30-10:30; www.deadmonton.com

PARKLAND CINEMA 7

130 Century Crossing, Spruce Grove, 780-972-2332, Serving Spruce Grove, Stoney Plain, Edmonton, Canada

HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL 3 (G)
Nightly 6:45, 9:15; Sat, Sun & Tue 12:45, 3:30

SAW V (18A disturbing content, gory scenes)
Nightly 7:15, 9:30; Sat, Sun, & Tue 1:05, 3:25

NICK & NORAH'S INFINITE PLAYLIST (PG coarse language)
Nightly 7:10; Sat, Sun & Tue 1:10

MAX PAYNE (14A violence)
Nightly 7:05, 9:20; Sat, Sun & Tue 1:15, 3:25pm

EAGLE EYE (14A)
Nightly 6:50, 9:10; Sat, Sun & Tue 12:55, 3:20

BEVERLY HILLS CHIHUAHUA (G)
Nightly 6:55, 9:05; Sat, Sun & Tue 1:00, 3:10 Movies For Mommies: Tue Oct 28, 1:00pm

BODY OF LIES (14A brutal violence, coarse language)
Nightly 9:00; Sat, Sun & Tue 3:00pm

PASSCHENDAELE (14A gory scenes, coarse language)
Nightly 7:00, 9:25; Sat, Sun & Tue 12:50, 3:15

PRINCESS

10437-82 Ave, 780-433-0728

BRICK LANE (PG coarse language, mature themes)
Nightly 6:50, 9:00; Sat & Sun 2:30

THE DUCHESS (14A)
Nightly 7:00, 9:15; Sat & Sun 2:00

SCOTIABANK THEATRE WEM

WEM, 8882-170 St, 780-444-2400

PRIDE AND GLORY (14A coarse language, violence, not recommended for children)
Fri-Thu 12:45, 3:45, 6:45, 9:45

HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL 3: SENIOR YEAR (G) no passes
Fri-Thu 1:00, 4:00, 7:00, 9:50

SAW V (18A gory scenes, disturbing content)
Fri-Thu 12:20, 3:00, 5:30, 8:00, 10:30

One mediocre cop

Pride and Glory doesn't add much to a well-established genre

MALCOLM AZANIA / malcolm@vancouverweekly.com

The world of Irish-American cops has been mined by Hollywood for decades, so it's getting tough to find anything new or any new ways to say it about them. HBO's *The Wire* said plenty about cops in general and Irish-American badgemen in particular, and said it in plenty of new ways. But *Pride and Glory*, with smashing direction and fine performances, says nothing we don't already know, or think we know, from years of feasting on TV and movie cop dramas.

Pride and Glory is the Abel and Cain-in-law story of Ray Tierney (Edward Norton) and his sister's husband Jimmy Egan (Colin Farrell). Ray, Jimmy, Ray's brother Francis Jr and their dad "Pop" Francis Sr (Jon Voight) are all cops; in fact, Pop is an ambitious senior policeman still counting on Ray to become the world's greatest detective. But whereas Francis Jr climbs the ranks only to settle into command as if he were managing a furniture store, detective Ray is still traumatized by something no one wants to discuss—including Pop, who tells him,

COPS

OPENS FRI, OCT 24

PRIDE AND GLORY

DIRECTED BY GARY O'NEILL

CASTING BY J. J. CONNOR, JOE CAPRANZA, ROBERT

ROPER

STARRING EDWARD NORTON, COLIN FARRELL, JON

VOIGHT

★★★

essentially, to walk it off. After four police are slain in an ambush, Pop begs and threatens his star son Ray to join in the hunt for the killer.

The problem, as we learn early in the movie and via its ads, is that brother-in-law Jimmy commands a crew of corrupt cops indirectly responsible for the ambush. For Ray to succeed, he must doom the career of his negligent brother Francis and ruin his sister's life by sending her husband Jimmy to jail.

PRIDE AND GLORY entertains ably with its violence and chases, and sometimes achieves sublime moments, as when Pop drunkenly stumbles through his Christmas dinner elegy to his beleaguered family, when a corrupt cop confesses to Francis Jr the

depth and stench of his crimes or when Francis Jr and his cancer-struck wife speak quietly of their life while facing her impending death. Such moments are this film's greatest strengths, examining the twin cancers destroying the Tierney dynasty, and are enhanced by the best cop movie score—plenty of strings and delicate guitar work—since that of Michael Cimino's *Year of the Dragon*. Jon Voight is excellent as the staggering

patriarch, and Noah Emmerich is intriguing as grieving proto-widower and commander only beginning to perceive the fall-out of his neglect.

Pride and Glory should have extended such strengths to the film's villains. Jimmy is compelling only for rubbernecking at his evil deeds. Despite the grandeur of the film's title, the film offers little beyond the, "I risk my life every day for 65 grand a year?" to account for several cops'

fall from grace, and thus Farrell while entertaining, is largely wasted. Norton has demonstrated time and again how well he can play wounded and sensitive, and he doesn't get to do much more than that. But the film's greatest waste is its refusal to engage—even to the shallowness of Farrell's Jimmy—the assorted coloured criminals whose crimes set the plot in motion and are the steam rising from its shit. ▼



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DVDetective

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 27

lime scene—after Marilyn is essentially raped by Charlie, mind—where Marilyn feeds Michael a strawberry: it's a magnificently understated way of showing their connection, and it's one of the few times this collection of characters seems able to find the connection to each other they're so desperately seeking, even if they are dressed up in costumes.

Korine is also adept at letting moments play out without forcing perspective. A silent bit where Charlie and Marilyn fight is both wrenching—it comes after the brutal moment mentioned above—and strangely hilarious, essentially a recreation of Chaplin's animated comic style roped into marital strife. The best one might be when the Stooges are sent to execute the sheep that serve as the commune's main support, though: there's a definite sense of impending doom as the men unload rifles into the diseased herd, but there's something undeniably ridiculous about Larry, Curly and Moe the executioners, and Korine is restrained enough to never tip his hand one way or the other. Some found this subdued style to be off-putting on the film's initial release, but the ambiguity has a way of making the film stick around in your head, and if you have some patience, repeated viewings on DVD will likely only deepen appreciation for the film's subtle tones.

THAT KIND OF RESTRAINT would have been welcome in *Chapter 27*, JP Schaefer's take on the days of Mark David Chapman's life leading up to his assassi-

nation of John Lennon, out on Peace Arch. There's little in the way of subtlety or layering throughout the film; it comes across as little more than the documentary of a madman.

Chapter 27's centerpiece is the performance of Jared Leto, who bulked up significantly to play Chapman. Though he received some praise on the film's initial release, to me it seems like little more than a flesh fat suit and a wispy drawl. Of course, the script probably deserves as much blame as Leto here: it's really not interested in understanding Chapman so much as portraying him, and consequently comes across as little more than pale imitation, a recreation of an obsessed, troubled fanboy who wants to kill Lennon for reasons that are never really made clear, beyond the fact Chapman is clearly crazy (though, again, why is only really hinted at, at best).

That could be viewed as a mark of restraint if it wasn't for the fact Leto devolves into full-on crazy man in the last half-hour of the film, any subtlety thrown out the window as the film amps up how bananas Chapman is. That the ending is already given away kills any tension that might have been created and so it just comes across as a kind of burlesque, Schaefer trying to take some comfort in the fact that only someone seriously deranged would do such a thing. That may well be true, but there are plenty of underlying reasons that can push people towards that edge without making them go over it, and *Chapter 27* would have seriously benefited from any kind of examination beyond what a killer might have had running through his head before he did it. ▼

Good enough after all

Chris Eaton's cracked view helps Rock Plaza Central smile through the bad times

On the opening song of 2003's *The World Was Hell to Us*, Chris Eaton leads with a decaying, over spacious banjo plucks and a shuffling tamborine. "You know I'm only in this for the money," he sings.

Delivered in Eaton's cracking wail, it's a slyly ironic joke, a knowing nod to the sparse, frequently melancholy album that follows has, like nearly all of Eaton's work, a particular kind of appeal. But what an appeal it is: Eaton, a novelist and the lead singer and songwriter for **Rock Plaza Central**, is the kind of writer the world needs, even if it doesn't quite know it yet. Enigmatic and elusive, but with a piercing ability to tap into the rawest and most telling moments of human experience, he is the cracked, dusty mirror in society's attic, the imperfect reflection opening up entirely new perspectives if you make it up there.

Which is to say that, what Eaton may lack in mass appeal, he makes up for in personal connection. Like Neutral Milk Hotel—a band that Rock Plaza Central draws frequent, not-entirely-valid comparisons to for their sound (as Eaton so eloquently put it in the interview, "We both play a lot of rustic instruments and have a guy who can't sing")—the lack of widespread recognition seems to only deepen the experience for those who do get on his wavelength.

And you get the sense that Eaton really wouldn't have it any other way. Though he's appreciative of the band's recent rise in popularity—a glowing Pitchfork review of the band's brilliant 2006 independent release *Are We Not Horses?* pushed them out of the small Toronto clubs where they used to jam and onto Yep Roc Records and several tours of North America—he talks frequently about the band being more of a chance to hang out with his friends, breaking up the solitude of writing. And he's only encouraged by the fact that the more comfortable and confident they become with each other, the more people seem to respond—and often in a kind of it-changed-my-life way that

"It's honestly the best part, these situations where you meet people after the show and get these kinds of stories that are just so personal," Eaton explains over the phone from Toronto, occasional twangs belying his Sackville, NB roots. "There was a



COVER

TUE, OCT 28 (8 PM)
ROCK PLAZA CENTRAL
WITH JASON COLLETT, ZEUS
URBAN LOUNGE (10544 - 82 AVE), \$15

couple at a show on our last tour that came, and they had been at a show a year before that, and they had basically met right before that show, through the music. They were at a party, and started talking about the album, and had the same experience with it, this kind of, 'Yeah, all my friends hate them, but I really, really like it, it's my favourite album,' and ended up coming to a show of ours together the next week.

"Then after the show, they just took off together: they quit their jobs, just got in the car and drove around, listening to the CD over and over again, and travelled around the country and stuff," Eaton continues, a sense of awe building in his voice. "And we ran into them again in a totally different city and showed up and told us that story. It's something incredibly exciting that you can touch somebody's life like that. And having them tell us that story, they touch our lives right back. It's really, like ... yeah."

THOUGH IT ISN'T consciously designed

that way—Eaton explains most of their songs come from the band improvising on "half-baked ideas I have while I'm falling asleep the night before"—Rock Plaza Central's music nevertheless seems hopelessly destined to draw that kind of powerful reaction, whether for or against. Though the band employs as many as seven musicians at once, each with a bent towards cacophony, the songs remain sparse and intimate, each guitar pluck, horn blast, violin bend or drum beat placed for maximum efficiency at minimum effort. Eaton's lyrics are specifically ambiguous, trading direct meaning for emotional heft, mixing abject sorrow with a kind of crooked-smiled satisfaction. *Are We Not Horses?* is ostensibly a concept album about mechanical horses who think they're the real thing helping humans wage an apocalyptic war against the angels, but the story is often little more than a backdrop to delve into feelings of inadequacy, isolation and the necessity and release of togetherness.

But even that might be inadequate. One of Eaton's greatest strengths as a writer, whether fiction or music, comes from a willingness to let the reader/listener fill in their own experience. More often than not he is simply presenting an emotional tableau, a situation that demands some kind of response, and letting the person figure out what that is.

"I tell stories now in indirect ways, that are more like showing snapshots of things, and you see so many snapshots that you get to piece the story together yourself," explains Eaton. "Partly that's just because anything that's spelled out for me too much just gets too boring, and I like things that are ambiguous. But I also like the idea that this is a communal thing: I try to make things in such a way that whoever is experiencing them is an active participant."

To that end, Eaton seems to prefer to push things to the extremes, and in particular seems to like metaphors that deal with the world coming to an end. His first novel, *The Inactivist*, is about an ad writer who grows a conscience and attempts to shift society away from coming environmental destruction, and obviously *Are We Not Horses?* deals with the end of the world directly. As Eaton explains, it's often through the extremes that he can make sense of the smaller travails of the world.

"I think it's just a sense of drama that attracts me to those themes. I

think drama exists in most music: when people write a song, even Top 40 radio stuff, it's all about these horrible breakups, and to the person involved with it, it's the end of the world. I tend to take those things literally, and sort of make it into these apocalyptic scenarios that really capture that," he says. "In the same way that obviously I'm not a robot horse, the plight of that is so over the top, it maybe becomes more real, more of an accurate depiction of the emotions that can go through somebody when they're feeling left out or something like that."

BUT HIS OBSESSION with something as big as the end of the world runs deeper, too. Eaton seems to draw inspiration from moments of loss and despair, the times in our lives when we are going through the worst something that helps explain his particular appeal. Whether it's mechanical horses struggling to deal with their identity or the more straightforward relationship problems that populate *The World Was Hell to Us* or his two novels—*The Grammar Architect*, a "literary cover" of Thomas Hardy's *A Pair of Blue Eyes* is the other—his focus is decidedly on the more melancholy side of life.

And yet one of the most endearing qualities of his work is that he avoids the downtrodden pity, self or otherwise, that so often follows from it. Above all Eaton is a consummate optimist, someone who believes the world and all its troubles are well worth putting up with for all the good that life can give.

"I think 'Fuckup' [a pulsing number from *Hell to Us* where Eaton sings, 'All of my relationships / I've fucked up / in all the right ways'] is a good example of the ways that things have developed for me," explains Eaton. "That's partly just saying, you know, thank God I've screwed up all these other relationships, because that's what's brought me to this now. But also—and there's a lot of songs in the new stuff that have this sort of feeling—that, if it all ends right now, thank God it happened. There's going to be ups and downs in everybody's life, and be thankful for the ups and take all that you can, and be happy for that."

As Eaton alludes to, that sort of feeling seems to be getting more and more central to his thought as time goes on: he says it's one of the running themes of the new album the band is working on, and it pops up a



few times in *Are We Not Horses?*, in songs like "When We Go, How We Go (Part I)" and album closer "We've Got a Lot to be Glad For." It's something he partly attributes to getting older—"Once you've had enough ups and downs, maybe, then you start thinking that things are going to work out in the end"—though you get the distinct impression that it's due as much as anything to his worldview, which has a way of seeing things in a very different light than most.

"There's a song that we wrote called 'The World is Good Enough,' where I started singing 'The rabbit beneath the lion's paw knows the world is good enough after all / The bird inside the house cat's paw knows the world is good enough after all,'" says Eaton, "because, you know, he was a bird: it was a great life, while it lasted. It's awesome to have been born as a bird as a first place, and the several months he was alive was worth it until the cat killed him."

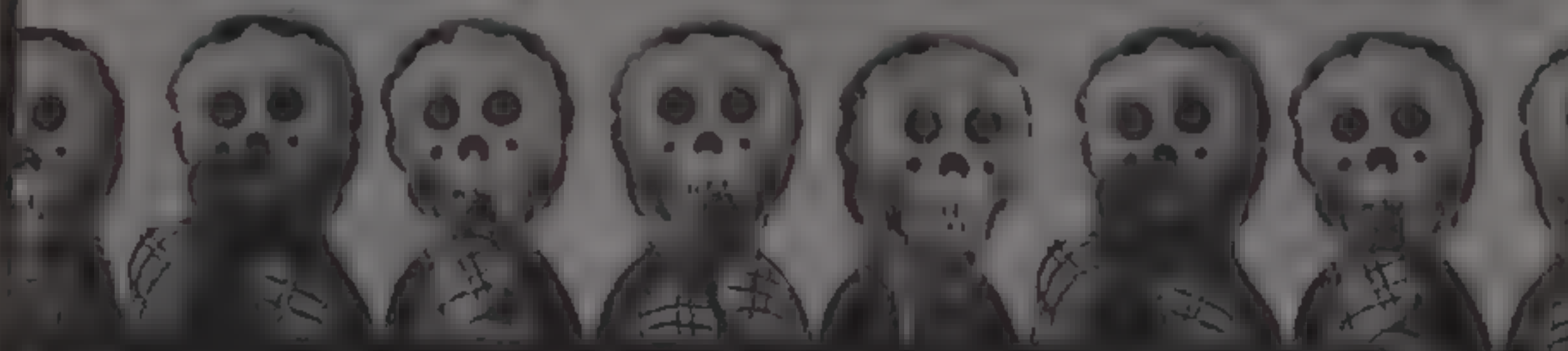
"There are certainly really sad parts about the last two records, and in the new one, too: I'm kind of worried about doing the shows and crying, or something," he continues. "But overall, I think it's got that optimism that, even through the bad times, we can make things better." ▽

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THE RAPTORS PERFORMING AS THE AC/DC TRIBUTE

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BIG CHAIR CAFE Open stage,
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BLUES ON WHYTE Terry Hancock

CHRISTOPHER'S PARTY PUB Open stage
hosted by Alberta Crude, 6-10pm

DRUID Open mic, Thursdays

DAUSTIN'S PUB Thursdays open stage
hosted by the Mary Thomas, 8-11pm

DVB Open mic, Thursdays

ECO CAFE Open Mic Nights 1st and
3rd Thu every month, 6:30-8:30pm
openmic@deadmansdog.com

EDDIE SHORTS Open stage
Thursdays hosted by Kicks and Thrill

FESTIVAL PLACE Aaron Lines

FOUR ROOMS

HAVEN SOCIAL CLUB Open Jam

HULBERT'S Phyllis Sinclair

IVORY CLUB Live Dueling Pianos, no
cover, 8pm

JAMMERS PUB Thursday open jam
7-11pm

J AND M BROS AND CAFE Open stage
with the Porter Boys (pop/rock/blues),
8:30pm-12:30am

LB'S PUB Open jam with Ken
Skorsky, 9pm

LIVE WIRE BAR AND GRILL Open
Stage Thursdays with Gary Thomas

NEW CITY Big Joe Burke

NORTH GLENORA HALL Jam by
Wild Rose Old Time Fiddlers

ROCK PUB Jazz Night with Jonny
Mac, 9pm-1am, no cover

STARLITE ROOM Open stage, Thursdays,
8pm-11pm, \$5 cover

DEBBAN LOUNGE Open stage, Thursdays,
8pm-11pm, \$5 cover

WILD WEST SALOON Open stage, Thursdays,
8pm-11pm, \$5 cover

CLASSICAL

WINGSPAN CENTRE Orpheus Drangar

DJS

BACKROOM VODKA BAR Thursday
Nights: Electro Education: dub, trip
hop, lounge, electro with DJ Lazer

BILLY BOB'S LOUNGE Escapack
Entertainment

BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE Big Rock
Thursdays: DJs spin on three levels

BUDDY'S Wet underwear contest
with Mrs Fellow, midnight, DJ
West Coast Baby Daddy

FILTHY MCNASTY'S Thursdays
Bingo with DJ S.W.A.G.

FLUID LOUNGE Girls Night out

FUNKY BUDDHA (WHYTE AVE) Requests
with DJ Damian

GAS PUMP Ladies Nite: Top
40/dance with DJ Christian

GIRLON KAY Thursdays

HALO Thursdays Fo Sho: with Allout
DJs DJ Degree, Junior Brown

KAS BAR Urban Houser with DJ
Mark Stevens, 9pm

LEVEL 2 LOUNGE Dish Thursdays
funky house/techno with DJ Colin
Hargreaves, house/breaks with DJ
Krazy K, hardstyle/techno with DJ
Decca, tech trance/electro with DJ
Savage Garret, no minors, no cover

NEW CITY I Love '80s Party with
Blue Jay, Nazz Nomed, no minors
8:30pm (door)

NEW CITY Electroshock Therapy:
Dervish, Dildover, Nazz Nomed, in the

Suburbs, no minors, 8pm (door), 9pm
(bingo hosted by Squirrelly B)

THURSDAYS Dance lessons at 8pm,
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3 Inches of Blood

WITH **EVILE**

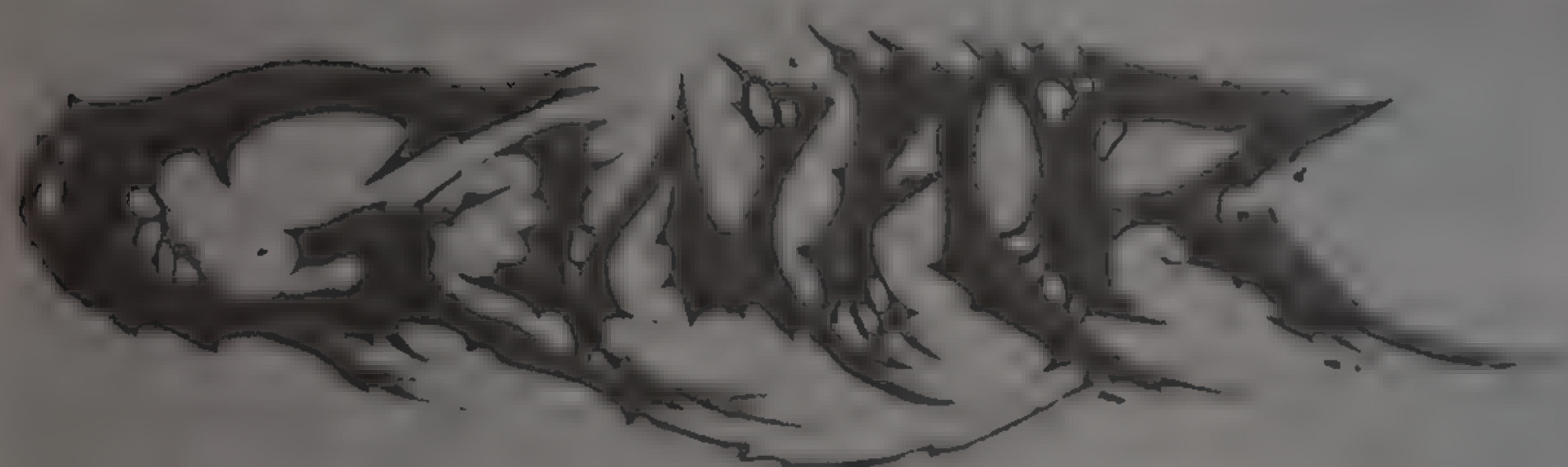
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cjsr

VUE



NOVEMBER 8 • EDMONTON EVENT CENTRE

DOORS 7 PM • ALL AGES • TICKETS ALSO AT MEGATUNES & BLACKBYRD (WHYTE AVE)

VUE

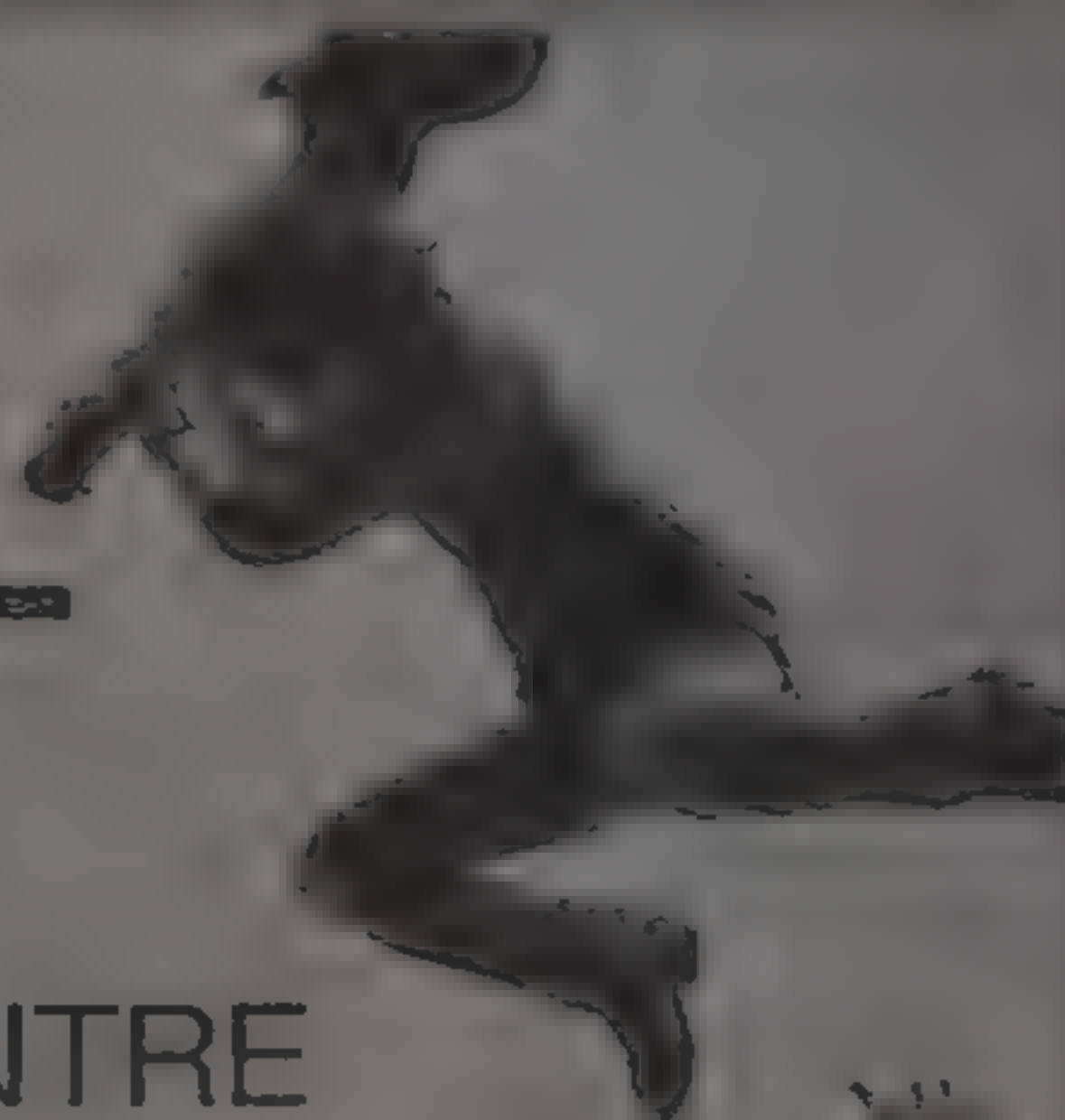
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EDMONTON EVENT CENTRE

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Stephen Malkmus & the Jicks

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CJSR FUNDRIE KICK-OFF PARTY

SAT OCT 25 PAWN SHOP

FEMBOTS

WITH OCTOBERMAN & THE PROVINCIAL ARCHIVE

SAT OCT 25 MACDOUGALL UNITED

TAGAO

TRICHO BEACH MUSIC ARTIST FROM HUNAYU

TUE OCT 28 URBAN LOUNGE

Jason Collett
Rock Plaza Central & Zeus

WED OCT 29 PAWN SHOP PRESENTED BY THE UNION

Hayes Carll

Scott Nolan

October 29

THU OCT 30 PAWN SHOP

shotgun jimmie

FRI OCT 31 STARLITE BOP PRESENTS THE 2ND ANNUAL HALLOWEEN

BANDS AS BANDS & DJs AS DJs

THE 2ND ANNUAL HALLOWEEN BOP PRESENTS THE 2ND ANNUAL HALLOWEEN BOP PRESENTS THE 2ND ANNUAL HALLOWEEN BOP PRESENTS THE 2ND ANNUAL HALLOWEEN

FRI NOV 7 VELVET UNDERGROUND

FALLANKS

THE 2ND ANNUAL HALLOWEEN BOP PRESENTS THE 2ND ANNUAL HALLOWEEN BOP PRESENTS THE 2ND ANNUAL HALLOWEEN

SAT NOV 8 PAWN SHOP

LAND OF TALK

WITH JOSH KITCHMANN TANGIER

SUN NOV 9 PAWN SHOP

HEY ROSETTA
with two hours traffic & The Whitsundays

FRI NOV 14 PAWN SHOP

THE BICYCLES

SAT NOV 15 PAWN SHOP

MATTHEW BARBER
THE SPADES

SAT NOV 22 CONVOCATION HALL, UOFA

JUSTIN RUTLEDGE
JENN GRANT

SUN NOV 23 STARLITE ROOM

THE HERBALISER

THU NOV 27 PAWN SHOP

BIG JOHN BATES & THE VODOO DOLLZ

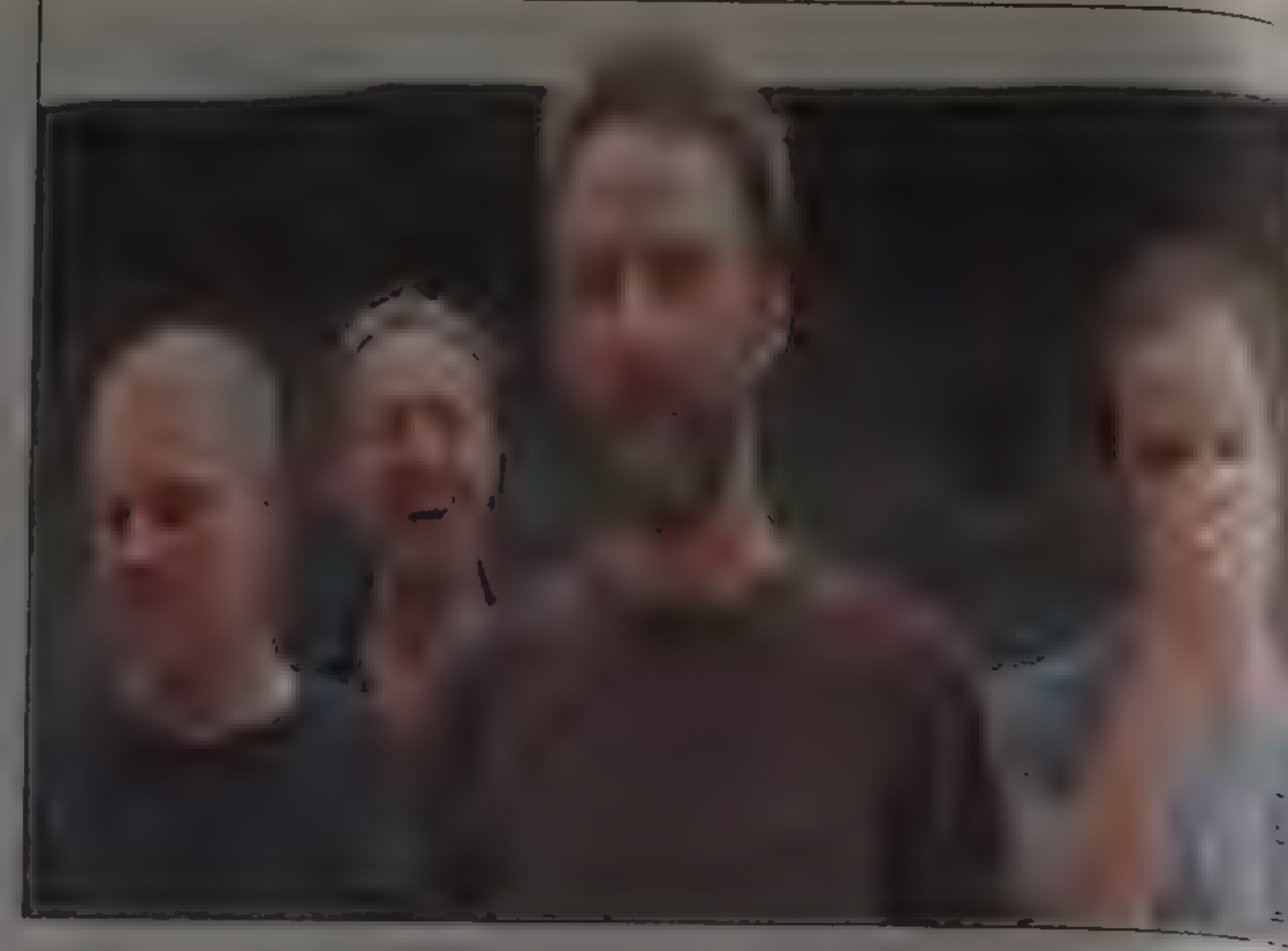
FRI NOV 28 VELVET UNDERGROUND SMALLMAN ARTISTS

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THIS CIVIL TWILIGHT + GUESTS

SUN NOV 30 URBAN LOUNGE

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Heed the call

The FemBots are *Calling Out* to the sound of junkstruments

MARY CHRISTA O'KEEFE / marychrista@vuwweekly.com

The City was a hard act to follow. The FemBots third album was released in 2005 as a searching lament for and scorching condemnation of the changes in the group's Toronto urban environment as the property boom hijacked colourful neighbourhoods, burying them beneath the suffocating sameness of gentrification and pricing out artists and long-time inhabitants, while adding to the sprawl that rings Toronto like residue from a frequently clogging drain.

"It dealt with a resonant issue, one going on all over the place, certainly all across Canada," recalls Dave MacKinnon. "It touched a nerve."

The FemBots had been steadily garnering acclaim since the band's 2000 release, a home-baked aural project cooked up by MacKinnon and friend Brian Poirer with "power tools, toys and broken thrift shop instruments". Three years later, *Small Town Murder Scene* showed off the duo's evolving songcraft, glitchy roots-rock creations that hewed the darker side of the human soul.

But that third album, brilliant and evocative, really broke the group, launching several tours that brought it across Canada, the States and Europe in successively expansive waves.

"Any message we have on our records is usually accidental," MacKinnon offers. "It occurs to us when we look back at all the songs, even *The City*. We were three quarters of the way into writing it when we realized what it was about. Up until that point, we just have our head down, working away."

The group begins records with a loose idea of an approach, rather than a set of skeletal songs to be fleshed out. For the recently released *Calling Out*, the band wanted to return to its experimental roots, inspired by garbage-picked music-making creations by old art school colleague Iner Souseter.

"It started out with Iner's 'junkstru-

PREVIEW SAT, OCT 25 (8 PM)
THE FEMBOTS
WITH OCTOBERMAN, THE PROVINCIAL ARCHIVE
PAWN SHOP

ments'—we spent one year just idling, just with them," MacKinnon recounts. "We'd just gotten off the road, we had been touring for a couple years and were ready—looking—to make another record. We wanted to do something different than what we had done before, something not coming strictly from a songwriting approach, but with an element of improvisation."

THE JUNKSTRUMENTS were finicky partners—uneven divas whose performances were never uniform or reliable. "We spent close to one year fooling around with them, but then we hit the wall writing with them. We had one or two things, but they were unstable and unpredictable. We started building up tracks by looping sounds, and they were almost electronic at that point. So we needed to make that leap from strange rhythm track to song, and Brian suggested 'let's try playing along to this.'"

The junkstruments became richly textured bed tracks, and with the addition of drummer/multi-instrumentalist Nathan Lawr to the band, a more focused rock sound emerged, to be draped overtop.

"Before, we were thinking the Iner stuff would be one record, then Brian and I would collaborate and write a more traditional record, and somehow that turned into the same record," MacKinnon laughs.

Calling Out also builds on MacKinnon's themes in *The City*, but expands from local concerns to global ones. "This one has way more songs about religion and politics. There are so many alarming things going on in the world, and no discussion about it really. It's been nice to see meaning and dissent creep back into music." V

Sing from the throat

Tagaq takes her balls out of her purse

watch Tanya Tagaq Gillis
n, you may see her lose it,
y see her slip into another
but you won't see a person

he heels of her second album,
J, an album that sees her
her experimentation of Inuit
aging into compelling dimen-
it is surprising to hear her say
tracks are too passive.
as kind of being a pussy," she
was just the time in my life,
getting my balls back really
now."

chalks it up to her time in Spain,
where despite becoming conversant in
ish over the couple years she
at there she just didn't have the
to fully express herself.

When I was living in Spain, it was
redible, but it also deconstruct-
my self-esteem because when I
ed there, I was five months preg-
and I couldn't speak a word of
nish, and my boyfriend, at the
he couldn't speak English," she
lains. "So I went from being this
on that relied almost 100 per cent
her personality to somebody who
no family—like, couldn't commu-
ate with anybody, no friends, and I
that it must of humbled me in

PREVIEW

SAT, OCT 25 (8 PM)
TAGAQ
WITH CRIS DERKSEN, MICHAEL RED
MCDUGALL UNITED CHURCH, \$18

some form. I'm just stabilizing now."

THERE IS PROBABLY more than just Spain to stabilize from for this fire-cracker from Cambridge Bay, Nunavut. She went from art student in Halifax to recording and touring with Björk (for Björk's *Medulla* album) in what must have seemed a nanosecond, and just a handful of years later, she has collaborated with everyone from Canadian favourites Buck 65 and Jesse Zubot to American musicians Kronos Quartet and Michael Patton (Faith No More). She's won a Juno and her latest album has been nominated for four Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards.

Take all of this into account and you begin to see how the loss of balls might be disconcerting for her. One could argue, however, that the leveling out has more to do with Tagaq discovering her sense of self and living with it.

There was a time, for example, when she worried about how she was experimenting with throat singing, worried that she was messing with a culture. Throat singing is traditionally

done by two women, and it is done more in fun, a game to see who will lose concentration first. Tagaq uses throat singing, however, to dig deep inside herself, to express all of the contradictions of her spirit. And for this, she's seen a bit of a backlash

"I realized, you wouldn't care if I wasn't doing well. You really wouldn't care if I was sitting in my living room

doing it," she says of some of the flak "And I 100 per cent quit apologizing for who I am. Just going, okay, you know what? This is me, and take it or leave it. If you don't like it, don't listen to it. When I'm home, I've had so many other throat singers come up to me and be, like, 'I loved it!' Like I just met a throat singing duo from Iqaluit, and one of them almost

cried after my show because she was so happy for me

"I find people that like to support each other will support me, and people that like to bring each other down will bring me down, but it's, like, they're not going to do that to me any more," she adds "The elders in my community love what I do. you know? So I just don't care, anymore." ♥



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SEX WITH STRANGERS
 FRIDAY, OCT. 24, 8 PM
 HIGH SUPERVISED DANCE HALL DANCING
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 NEW CITY

CAROLYN NIKODYM / carolyn@vuwweekly.com

According to David Levy, author of *Love and Sex With Robots*, intimate relations between humans and robots is a possibility within a hundred years.

If you find yourself wondering if you'll live to see the day, you could bide your time with Sex With Strangers. The Vancouver band's debut LP—*The Modern Seduction*—follows the story that began on *A Future Tragedy*, a story that involves outlawed dancing, robot Persuaders and an uprising by the more human Formers.

The idea-men behind the concept, Hatch Benedict and Magnus Magnus, when the band officially formed early last year, and they didn't set out to make

any broad political statements. The song that started it all—"Dance Police"—was a simple reaction to Vancouver's *Safe for Robots*, where clubs outside the city's core are subject to earlier shut-down times. And like the Persuaders who would destroy all those dancing, the idea just kind of steam-rolled.

"Writing-wise, I've always been a fan of themes and stories," Benedict explains. "I don't write a lot of personal stuff—stuff like that is not a big thing for me. So I decided that the idea of putting this whole story together just kind of worked well from a writing standpoint for me."

Despite the initial inspiration, Benedict, Magnus and the more recently added band members—Keith Beavers, Isabelle "Bobbie" Duncan, Delite Skinner and Dallas Archangel—don't expect anybody to take the lyrics all that seriously. It's simple escapism, and you can't help but have fun with the beep-booping of this robot rock.

The questions do arise, however, will Sex With Strangers dig deeper into this

"Footloose set in 2048"? Will followup albums delve into the wiring of robot love?

"I don't think that there's a sequel to this," Benedict laughs. One thing he knows for sure is that he and band co-founder Magnus really like the idea of album themes. "We'll see what happens."

Although the band's lineup has plumped considerably, going from two to six members, the other part of the Sex With Strangers formula that will likely remain is Benedict and Magnus as the idea-men.

"I know a lot of bands go through it, but when we were in our previous incarnation with some of the same members, it was one of those where everyone shared the 'songwriting' duties, and we just found it tough. There wasn't any one person in charge," Benedict explains. "We like to take the ownership of the songs, and everyone else seems to be cool with that. But when it comes down to in the studio, the ideas that they put on there are wide open. And that's cool. Magnus and I agree that we think that is why we're enjoying ourselves so much." ▽

REVIEWS

SAT. OCT. 25 (6:30 PM)

HARVEST BLUES DINNER & DANCE

WITH MATT WALKER, KENNY "BLUES BOSS" WAYNE,

PAUL KALININ

OLD TIMER'S CABIN (9430-99 STREET), \$50

CAROLYN NIKODYM / carolyn@vuwweekly.com

Most blues fans will tell you that the blues is good for the soul. With its lyrical content—often about the lover who done you wrong—the blues is meant to drag those demons out of you, kicking and screaming until you just have to let go.

Letting go is one of the things that local bluesman Matt Walker had to perfect when he went into the studio to record his debut album, *Low Down*, last year. He'd been around the musical block, getting his start in Edmonton back in the '80s and drumming through much of the '90s in Toronto before returning, but this album was the first time he was navigating the vehicle.

"It's a totally different perspective and the band sounds totally different from standing in front of it to sitting behind it," he admits. "Everyone is looking to me to make it happen, whereas when you're a sideman, you're waiting for cues for the song to be called. You don't have a lot of responsibility except to perform on your instrument."

He was, however, embarking on the trip with a handful of musicians he knew well, so while he'd written the songs and knew the general

direction, he also knew that the guys might have some great ideas of their own.

"I kept my vision to myself, with the exception of saying initially what I was looking for. And then I let happen how those players play and how I play with them," explains. "And I trusted them. They, my friends, I worked with them a lot, so the only surprises I had were derfully pleasant ones and it was a great experience."

With many of the tracks rearing live off the floor, the result is unpredictable and raw—exactly what the blues is meant to sound like.

Some of what Walker knows about playing music comes from a combination with his time behind the easel. Painting has helped his things come out as they will.

"Songwriting is like painting," painting. Creating a gig and having musicians and conceiving of to put on a performance is a lot like painting a picture," Walker says. "Painting has the same kind of energy, and if it's deciding to go in a direction and you fight it, you tell it. You can see it, you can feel it in the painting, and that's the same with the band and songs."


"That actually helped me in the studio and writing these songs and performing live—to let it happen the way it's going to happen that day, at that moment, because you can't control everything. It's allowing it to breathe—that makes it good." ▽



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VUEWEEKLY

Spirited away

Guitar duo takes a bite out of history



ARIA KOTOVYCH / mana@vancouverweekly.com

While many of us have tried climbing the stairs in and around the River Valley, probably very few of us have ever written a song about it; however, Andrew Zohn, one of the two guitarists of Duo Spiritoso, composed a movement of a sonatina to emulate the feeling of going up and down a very long, steep set of stairs on a hillside in the small Italian town of Cervo, where the Duo plays at a guitar festival each year.

The second movement is a musical expression of the journey up and down the stairs. Everyone who has been to Cervo will feel the weight of the stairs going up and down. The good news is that you're in really good shape by the end of the summer," Zohn laughs, describing the movement entitled "Le Scale" ("The Stairs" in Italian) in *Cervo Sonatina*.

The piece is on Duo Spiritoso's program for its upcoming Edmonton concert. But it's not the only song where these musicians emulate other experience. The other Duo Spiritoso guitarist, Jeffrey McFadden, says that when they're playing Jean-Louis Rameau's "Gavotte et Six doubles," they use their guitars to imitate the sounds of earlier instruments such as the harpsichord. Rameau's original piece contains a board variation where the player alternates playing with the right and left hand; McFadden and Zohn imitate this sound by trading notes on their guitars in a quick back-and-forth fashion.

UNITY IS IMPORTANT In order to achieve such an effect, however, the duo deviates from many traditional conventions of playing the same guitar and trying to sound like one instrument. Zohn explains. He and McFadden do the opposite: they play different

PREVIEW
FRI, OCT 24, 6 (PM)
DUO SPIRITOSO
MUTTART HALL, ALBERTA COLLEGE, \$20-\$25

but also a lot of unity."

In addition to taking a unique approach to musical sound, the duo ensures an interesting concert by playing pieces from many different eras, including Baroque, Classical and modern.

Zohn explains that a song's time period will influence how the musicians interpret the work, affecting how they approach ornamentation, articulation and sound, along with suggesting the amount of time they make with gestures.

"We've become sensitive to the style of the particular pieces that we're doing," says McFadden, whose particular area of expertise is music from the Classical era.

"The name [Duo Spiritoso] says a lot about how we play—it is kind of a spirited playing, we try to put lots of energy into it, there's a lot of tempo, there's a lot of dynamic and accenting," McFadden points out. "We play with a lot of verve and a lot of bite in our playing." ▽

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Vincent Daoud saxophones

Yuji Noguchi clarinets

(from Paris)

PROGRAMME:

Georges Aperghis: Commentaires (excerpts) (1996) (25')

version for tenor saxophone and bass clarinet

Intermission

Jean-François Charles: Baguet (2008)

for tenor saxophone and bass clarinet (12')

Canadian premiere

Julia Naron: Monstres et princesses (2009) (13')

for bass clarinet and tenor saxophone

Canadian premiere

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VUE
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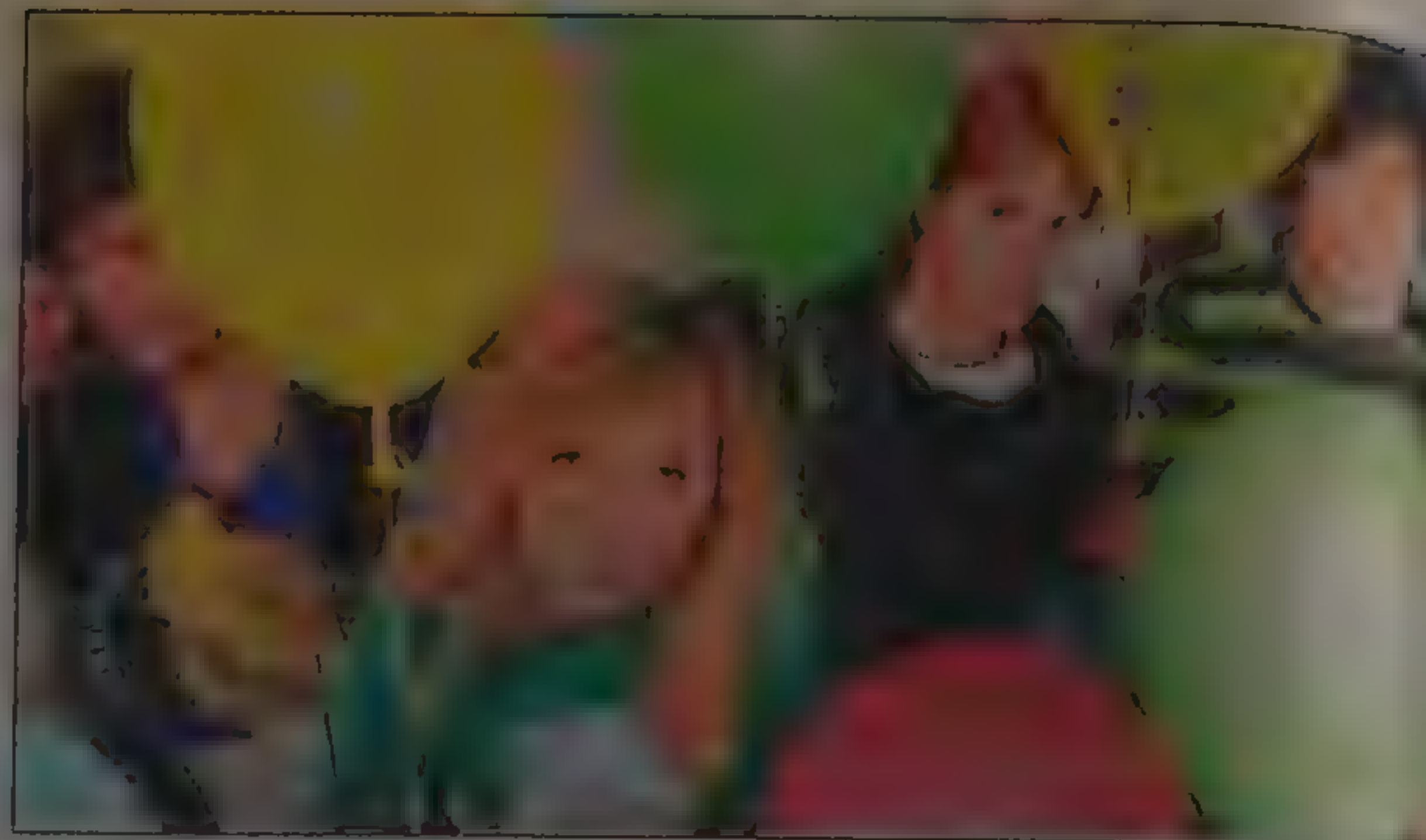


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Hey Ocean has a character
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BRYAN SAUNDERS / bryansaunders@vancity.com

A band with two lead singers is not the most common sight these days, but for the members of the Vancouver-based and West Coast-inspired band **Hey Ocean**, it's something that just made sense.

"We never set out to do anything specific," bassist Dave Vertesi explains. "We just started writing songs together and that was just the outcome where Dave [Beckingham] would bring a song and he would end up singing it. Or Ashleigh would come up with an idea and she would sing it. Or Dan, our drummer, would come up with an idea and whoever seemed right to sing on it, [would sing it]."

"It's really nice to have that freedom of a male or a female voice," he continues. "It's really awesome."

As Vertesi points out, having two strong vocalists also comes in handy when the rigours of the road start taking their toll on everyone's health.

"We use it to our advantage, for sure," he admits. "When we're on a tour, sometimes someone gets sick. So, if that's the case, we're able to ease their workload, I suppose. Say Ashleigh's really sick—she'll still have to sing—but we can play more of the songs that Dave sings. Or vice versa; if Dave was sick we might focus more on the songs that Ashleigh sings."

Could this also mean that when one of the two Daves in the band gets sick, the other one can fill in? Probably not, Vertesi laughs.

"We're pretty different characters. Once you get introduced to us or actually meet us, I don't think you have a lot of trouble distinguishing between the two."

PREVIEW

SAT, OCT 25 (8 PM)
HEY OCEAN
WITH BEDOUIN SOUNDCLASH, MISHKA
EDMONTON EVENT CENTRE, \$30

For one thing, Vertesi is the taller of the two, a fact that has earned him the nickname of "Tall Dave," and one can only assume—has earned Beckingham the nickname of "Short Dave."

"He's not even that short," Vertesi chuckles. "I mean a lot of people call me by my last name, too: Vertesi. And pretty much everyone calls Dave Beckingham 'Dave-O.'"

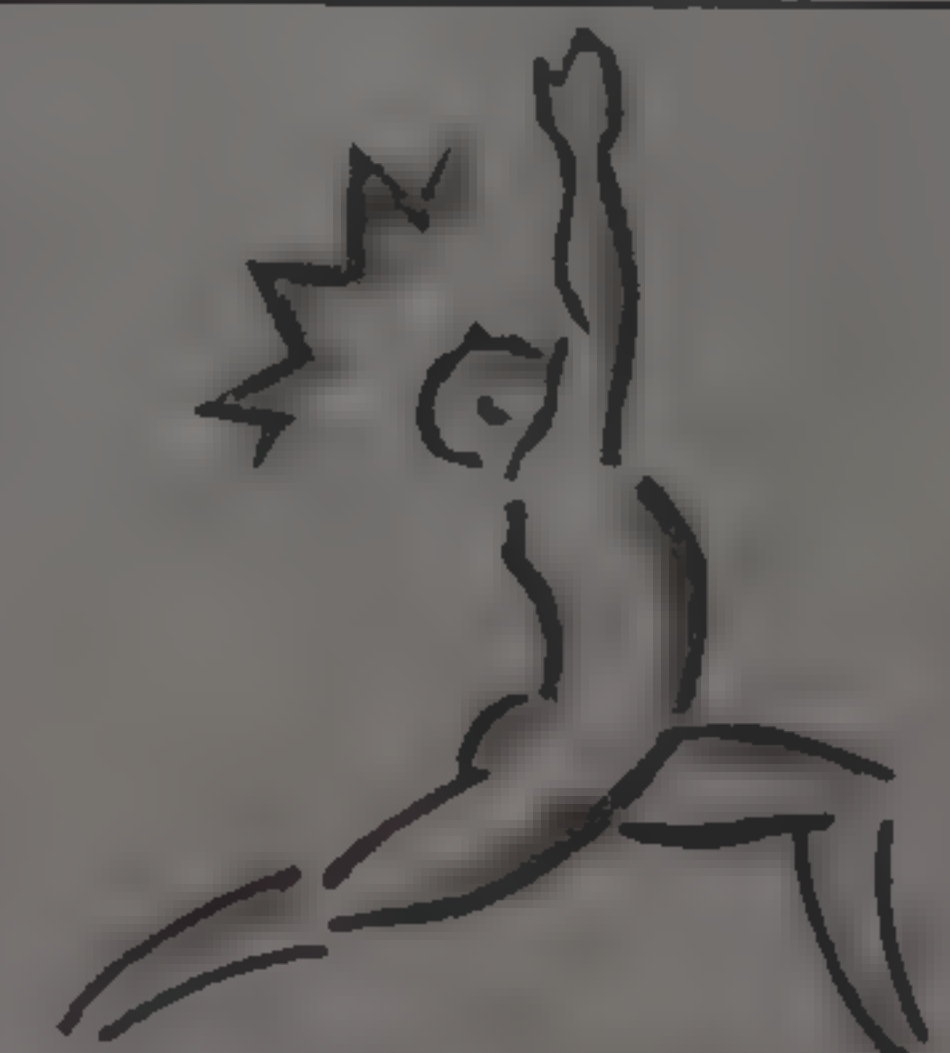
ON TOP OF THIS, the two of them have very different personalities, Vertesi points out.

"We're both just really outgoing people but in different ways. I think I'm a very driven person, and Dave is much more laid back," he explains. "Even when stuff with the band was first starting out, his approach was always been very laid back kind of laissez-faire. He works really hard but just means that he's very much like, 'Whatever happens, is gonna happen. And I was always like, 'We gotta go for the opportunities!'"

"People actually call me 'Verstressed' a lot because I'm a stress-case when we're on tour," Vertesi confesses.

In the end, Vertesi muses, the numerous dualities that exist within Hey Ocean are likely the source of the band's success.

"I think that's the reason why we've been so lucky and have had the opportunities that we've had so far. Different situations call for different attitudes, you know?"



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Meet the Perms

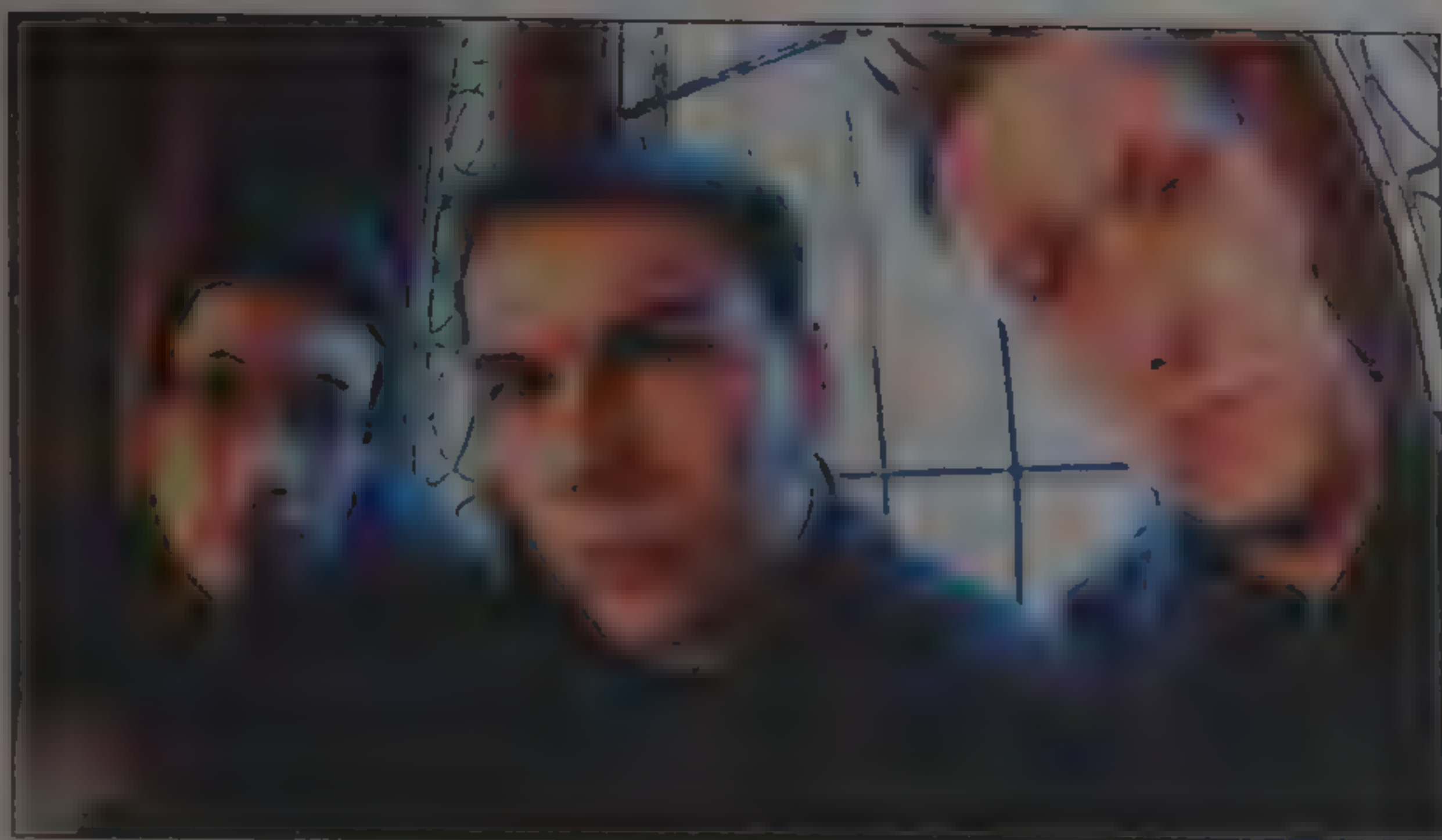
Winnipeg band sets off in new directions

BY BRIAN LEE / bryan@vancouverweekly.com

After 10 years of power pop songs about girls and friends and having a good time, the last couple of years have been a period of growth for the Perms. The group's new album, entitled *Keeps You Up at Night*, shows a real maturity in the sound, according to bassist Kane Smith, and he attributes that to the two years the band spent on the road promoting its previous album, as well as the things that were happening at home between tours.

"The past couple of years within the band has been a period of growth—life-changing experiences too. Band members experiencing death, band members changing jobs, stuff like that. That influenced a lot of the songwriting on this new record. It's a little more concentrated, as opposed to the other albums where it was a tongue-in-cheek type of song writing," he says. "If you listened to the old albums now, you'd probably think it was a different band."

DIFFERENT BAND OR NOT, the Perms certainly made a significant number of changes while making this newest album. The group dropped horns from the sound entirely and moved from a



PREVIEW SAT, OCT 25 (3 PM)
THE PERMS
WITH THE WIND WHISTLES
WUNDERBAR, \$5

very poppy sound into one that has a bit more a rock edge, as well as changing producers and studios, and all of these changes were designed to mix it up within the band and push things in a new direction. As well, the process of making the new record was recorded and put onto YouTube in addition to a number of podcasts

the band created and broadcast

"Our guitarist Chad, he was in school and he had taken a creative communications course. They had done a lot of that stuff in class, and he had done a lot of research, about new technologies—podcasts, video podcasts, that kind of thing. It was kind of switching with the times because the industry is a lot different than it was five or eight years ago, so you have to change with it," Smith explains. "It was sort of a natural progression for us to start revealing our music in a different way." ▽

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REVIEWS | NEW SOUNDS

The Buttless Chaps, *Cartography* (Mint) The opening title track of the Buttless Chaps' latest record, *Cartography*, tells the listener much about the album that is about to unfold, revealing secrets, telling lies and inviting misdirection at the same time that it offers the hope of charting a course through treacherous waters.

The song sways gently as it begins, a steady rhythm section rising and falling as a single electric guitar lets a simple, descending line of notes escape into the air, as though it's searching for a particular line to navigate.

Then Dave Gowans begins to sing, his deep voice entering calmly overtop of the instruments: "There is penalty / For deliberate misuse / Your hands are tied / Praying for a truth." His voice holds steady as Gowans offers both warnings and consequences buried within his words.

Cartography is an ideal name for an album that reveals itself as an expedition across unknown landscapes, matching in name the record's sense of discovery, of twists and turns, of behemoth rocks rising suddenly out of the ground where just moments ago there was plains and rolling hills.

In that opening song, the music moves steadily, almost sleepily ahead, until the base—that electric guitar continues to spill dreamy melodies—transforms into a nearly subsonic dirge worthy of Black Sabbath in spirit if not exactly in specifics, before pulling back as the various sounds disperse into silence.

This record was written entirely within an urban setting, contrasting with the origins of the band's previous couple of

albums in the northern forests of British Columbia, but there is still a sense of space to be heard here, as well as a longing for something more than the city can offer. In fact, it's very likely the urban beginnings have everything to do with the music's openness, conjured in a place where everything moves too fast and people are rarely afforded the opportunity to stop and catch their breath, let alone take the time to enjoy the air—especially

considering the fact that a moment to take a breath in a city is often a moment of realization of the extent of decomposition that our urban environments have undergone.

Much of *Cartography* is rooted in that search for something difficult to grasp—not to mention capture—

but there are moments where the chase seems close to over. On "Coal Grey Sky" Gowans takes on the city directly, admitting the loneliness of the city, yet also acknowledging that it is a place teeming with life, but in different ways than that which exists outside of its borders.

Musically, the Chaps lock in together relentlessly, with players drifting in different directions occasionally, but always with an eye on what the others are doing. And when they all lock into one groove, as they do on "Complications May Arise," there's a sense that an escape is imminent, lying within sight but just out of touch.

Much as a mapmaker has the ability to choose highlights to draw out, while leaving other information draped in shadows, the Chaps reveal much and obscure even more within the rolling hills of *Cartography*. —EDEN MUNRO / eden@vueweekly.com



Sarah Blackwood, *Way Back Home* (Stomp) On *Way Back Home*, Sarah Blackwood—whose dayjob is singing with psychobilly trouble-makers the Creepshow—pulls out her acoustic guitar and does some strumming to fine effect. In

the opening trio of songs alone there's the barbed attack of "Lonely Parade," the sad heartbreak of "Dyin' Day" and the '50s-styled anthem "My Mistake Baby Boy." Blackwood's voice is dusted with reverb, giving it a distant, lonesome roll, while the music turns on her rhythmic strumming, helped along by some restrained accents in the form of slippery electric guitars, accordion, harmonica and bass and drums—all of which are barely there, appearing only as ghostly shimmers across the songs. There's an untouched feeling to *Way Back Home* in that it sounds at time like a collection of homemade demos, but really it's more like an old, faded photograph capturing Blackwood and her emotions in the rawest form. —EDEN MUNRO / eden@vueweekly.com

Joël Fafard, *Three Hens Escape Oblivion* (Bayard Island) The album's title and cover art are what first attracted me to this album. *Three Hens Escape Oblivion*—that's just awesome! The farm theme continues into the instrumental

tracks on the album, melding country folk, bluegrass, Celtic and roots traditions. Fafard's album of toe-tapping, down-home songs oozes energy and spirit, many of the tunes sounding as if they could belong right at a barn dance. "So Chaland/Cluck Old Hen" and "Not Just Another Dead Rock" pulls listeners' imaginations right to a worn wooden floor packed with dancing couples. Other songs, such as "Road Hockey" and "Borrowed New and Blue," slow things down and draw out the twangy notes; this creates a tougher and grittier texture to the songs. Taken as a whole, the album's strength lies in its ability to paint musical pictures and to evoke stories and place through sound. —MARIA KOTOVYCH / maria@vueweekly.com

Parts & Labor, *Receivers* (Jag-jaguar) Did you know that noise can actually have a melody? Parts & Labor's *Receivers* is a collection of what seems like pastiches of found sounds and mixed them with instruments and electro chirps to create a beehive

of sound that swirls about in a frenzy. It's an oddly moving album, utilizing dynamics to get a point across in a way that other bands of Parts & Labor's ilk might learn from. Noise is just sound; it's all about how you use it. *Receivers* crafts a driving sound that takes you places while containing the (oh, so good) off-putting elements of noise. —BRYAN BIRTLES / bryan@vueweekly.com

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with Strangers, *The Modern Seduction* (Boutique Empire) Since the influence of electro-pop has caught on in the, er, pop world, the indie purveyors of the genre are at risk of sounding like Ashlee Simpson or Maroon 5. Vancouver's Sex with Strangers' latest release would have felt more original if I had heard it two years ago, before being shaped by too many familiar patterns of the ironic new wave. Despite the delightfully raw recording of the album, which eliminates the tiresome over-produced electronic element by playing back like it were a demo, *The Modern Seduction* needs a concentrated polishing to stand out from the pack.

—JONATHAN BUSCH / jonathan@vancouverweekly.com

James Taylor, Covers (GO) The recently retired middle class breezing down the highway on their first of many cross-country vacations would do well

to slide James Taylor's newest into the CD player, as they prepare to enjoy new arrangements of very familiar classics like "Suzanne,"

"Hound Dog" and even "On Broadway." Enthusiasts for the originals might find them a snore, but age-spotted hands will be kept busy drumming the steering wheel to Taylor's complex layering of acoustic and soft electric guitars and soulful vocals. I certainly didn't hate it.

—JONATHAN BUSCH / jonathan@vancouverweekly.com

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MUSIC OLD SOUNDS

edon@vancouverweekly.com

Mad For the Racket, The Racketeers (MuscleTone) Originally released:

2000 "Right now, it's time to kick out the jams, mother-fucker!" That was the cry to arms that preceded the second track on the MC5's 1969 debut. The record, titled *Kick Out the Jams*, came to land in the camp that became known as protopunk—those records which captured the



sort of attitude, an approach of wild abandon in the music, that went on to inspire the coming waves of punks.

One of those first bands of punks was the Damned, which hit the ground kicking and screaming with a single ("New Rose" in 1976 and a full-length record (*Damned Damned Damned*) in 1977, both marked by the hammering of guitars, beating of the drums and thumping of the bass. But, while the Damned has come to be regarded as one of the first punk groups, there's not so much a leap from the MC5's rock 'n' roll to the Damned's punk as there is an entirely logical evolution, stemming in large part from a shared distrust of "The System."

And, while it's sometimes said that old punks don't die, they just pick up an acoustic guitar and play country, that's not always the case. Sometimes old punks just keep on thrashing away on their electrics. So it is that the MC5's guitarist, Wayne Kramer, came to team up with the Damned's original

guitar player, Brian James, for what they envisioned as a collective where the two of them would bring the songs to a rotating cast of players.

Under the name Mad for the Racket, they made their first attempt at this with an album titled *The Racketeers*, recruiting Blondie's Clem Burke and the Police's Stewart Copeland on drums and Guns N' Roses' bassist Duff McKagan for an album that feels very much like a logical extension of Kramer and James' work with the MC5 and the Damned.

It's not pretty, that's for sure; in fact, *The Racketeers* sounds like exactly what it is: a couple of old punks and some friends hammering out some angry demons in the garage (or whatever space they may have put the songs together in).

There are plenty of sentiments along the lines of "I've been chewed right down to the bone," from "Chewed," and "It might be good and it might be bad / I don't know, we'll find out," from "All Fired Up," demonstrating both a determination to survive at all costs and a willingness to continue charging full-bore ahead into a world that seems forever on the edge of catastrophe.

As of now, though, this seems to have become a one-shot deal, as no continuation has ever surfaced, which is too bad, because sometimes you just need to know that those old punks are still giving it everything they've got. ▽

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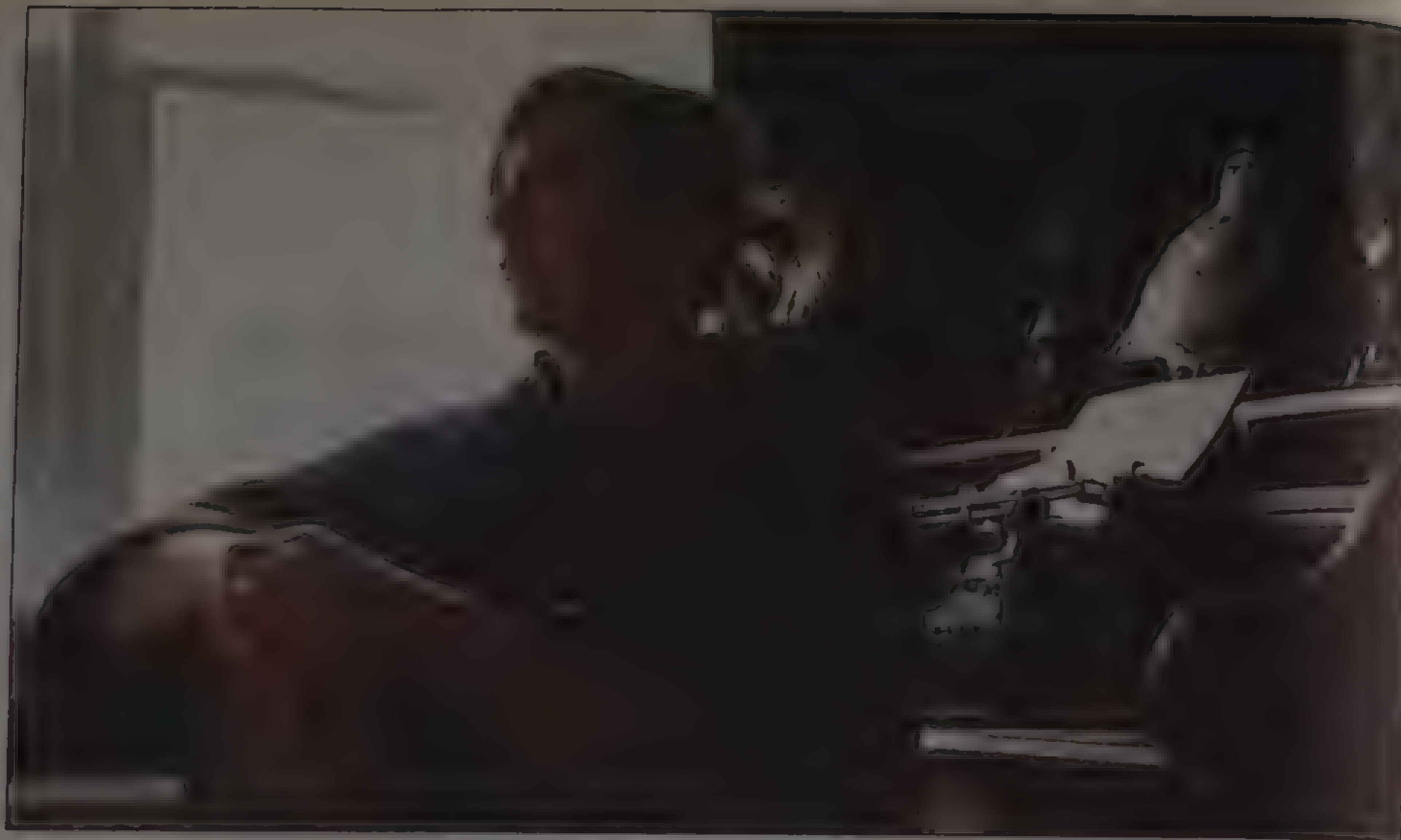
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Yellowhead Highway, revisited

The collaborative songcraft of the Pan-Canadian New Folk Ensemble

MARY CHRISTA O'KEEFE / marychrista@vancouverweekly.com

Even ensconced in the Winnipeg home she shares with husband and frequent musical playmate, Weakerthans' frontman John K Samson, and an assortment of critters and instruments, **Christine Fellows** is surrounded by distractions. There's a grant, mid-written and nearly due; the sweet-natured dog, barking at the also rather nice mailman, a regular if comically clichéd practice, despite numerous softhearted attempts at curbing it; a new piano, randomly tickled by the mischievous cat walking across its keyboard.

And there's another piano, decaying outside the house, Fellows also longs to play.

"We just got a new piano, so we have a yard piano this year—we moved the old one out there," she explains. "I want to write something for the yard piano, capture it as it deteriorates. When I come home drunk late at night and tinkle it, it sounds amazing. It's changing every day."

Fellows chuckles wistfully. "That will have to wait for another year; another piano. I have 16 songs to learn before I leave on Sunday."

The homebound distractions for the easygoing lady who will shortly be hitting the road as part of the bombastically titled **Pan-Canadian New Folk Ensemble** perhaps don't hold a candle to the one that perpetually accompanies her: Fellows has a reflexively observational nature, and her gleefully responsive mind chases down any alleys of thought that resonate with her or any absorbing experience she encounters. She gives herself over to these moments fully, absorbs them and transforms them into gifts for others, either as a raucously entertaining storyteller in conversation or in her songcraft, nuanced portraits of moments and characters she's plied and sharpened over four

PREVIEW

FRI, OCT 24 (7 PM)
THE PAN-CANADIAN NEW FOLK ENSEMBLE FALL TOUR 2008
FEATURING CHRISTINE FELLOWS, KIM BARLOW AND OLD MAN LUEDECKE
FULL MOON FOLK CLUB, \$17 (ADVANCE), \$20 (DOOR)

progressively more adept and fascinating solo records over the past eight years, most recently 2007's stunning *Nevertheless*, a moving masterwork that centered around an exploration, and perhaps new definition, of spinsterhood and partnership that wove together such disparate elements as American poetess Marianne Moore, the Greek goddess Athena and a pair of loyal rolling pigeons locked together in life and death.

WITH A MIND like that, a playground of imagination and endless curiosity, it's a wonder she gets anything done, let alone so much, let alone so well. But that mind is also her most trusted tool of her trade, and she must be armed with bucketloads of discipline, because she is incredibly productive: in addition to her records, Fellows is a master collaborator who has worked with installation artists and dance companies, as well as many other musicians.

"I do play with lots and lots of people," she says. "Last year, I played with a different band every time I went out. The songs are always realized in a completely different way."

And now Fellows has pooled her songs and resources with two peers, Kim Barlow and Old Man Luedecke, who likewise follow singular paths and share her fascination with a broader palette of human behaviour and wider experiential breadth than many current pop music artists, as well as a certain inclination towards unorthodox but melodious arrangements, banged out

with rock and folk gusto on instruments that vary from rustic to orchestral—cello and banjo, piano and ukelele, violin and battered percussion.

Yukon-based songstress Barlow matches Fellows with her four sparkling rootsy records, textural but spare-ish affairs that revel in oddball Northern characters and deal with life's disappointments and charms with even-handed grace and humour and her reedy, naïf voice, while Nova Scotian Old Man Luedecke has a knack for lightning-plucked banjo stompers that marry the anthemic with the backporch.

And now we see the wisdom of their shared name, as the Pan-Canadian New Folk Ensemble certainly triangulates different geographies from our massive nation, and the folk they practice is genuinely forward-looking. As for the 'Ensemble' bit, they live up to that, too backed by three additional musicians, the feature artists will play a 24-song set, eight from each songwriter, collectively interpreted by the group.

"The idea behind what we want to do is from festival workshops," Fellows reveals. "Usually, we don't have time to prepare for them, and I'm always faking my way through changes. But they are always such fun and the highlights of the festivals. So we want to take that idea, and take it on the road."

She adds, "As artists, we don't do this enough. We all have our own agendas, and this is hard to do—it was a lot of extra work, a logistical nightmare. But at the end of the day we can say we did this together. My favourite thing is performing other peoples' songs. As a writer, when you're done with it, you're done with it—you've spent all this time with your songs, worked through what you were trying to say. But performing them with a lot of different people and contexts—it's a new life for them." ♥

EVENTS WEEKLY

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PUBLISHED ON FRIDAY AT 3 PM

CLUBS/LECTURES

ALBERTA SENIORS UNITED NOW SOCIETY ST ALBERT CHAPTER GENERAL MEETING St. Albert Legion, 6 Tache St. St. Albert (780-418-5734) • **SENIORS ISSUES HOW IMPORTANT ARE THEY TO YOU?** Take this opportunity to meet other concerned individuals, exchange ideas and become informed • Mon Oct 27 (1:30pm)

AN INSIDER'S VIEW OF THE AMERICAN ELECTION U of A Tory Lecture Theatre, TL-12 • Congressman Jim Kolbe, Senior Presidential Fellow, The Marshall Fund; Presented by the Institute for United States Policy Studies • Oct 30 (7-9pm) • Free / open to all • www.usafellow.ca/fuaps

ANA 12-STEP SUPPORT GROUP Braeside Presbyterian Church basement, N. door, 6 Bernard Dr. Bishop St. Sir Winston Churchill Ave. St. Albert • For adult children of alcoholic and dysfunctional families • Meet every Mon including holidays (7:30pm)

SHIRDS AND TAN SANDS U of A Engineering Technology Learning Centre, 1003: www.usalberta.ca/ETSC • A Comprehensive Assessment of Impacts of Alberta Tar Sands Development on North America's Birds presented by Jeff Wells, author of the recently published *Birds' Conservation Handbook: 100 North American Birds at Risk* • Oct 28 (4-30pm)

SOON FOR VISION Oakview Plaza - Chateau LaCombe • Free public event on the state of Canada's natural resources with Maude Barakat, Dr. David Schindler and Andrew Nikifonik • Oct 31 (7-9:30pm); Nov 1 (8am-10pm); Nov 2 (9am-12pm) • (1-800-387-7177, www.333.ca)

CANADIAN NATIVE FRIENDSHIP CENTRE 11205-101 St (780-479-1999) • Basketball: Mon (5-7pm) • Healing Circle: Mon (6-8pm) • Boxing: Mon/Thu (7-9pm), Tue (5-7pm) • Volleyball: Tue (8-9pm) • Sewing Circle: Tue (6-8pm) • Bookwork Class: Wed (6-8pm) • C.N.F.C. Pow-wow: Wed (8-9pm) • Hip-Hop Class: every Thu (5-7pm) • One Class: Thu (6-8pm) • Elders and Residency: Fri (all day) • Safe Living and Home Reduction: last Fri every month (11am-12pm) • Tobacco Reduction: every Fri (11-2pm) • Drop-in Night: Fri (6-8pm)

CARDIO-CORE-YOGA All ages and levels are invited to try a new swimming & relaxing exercise program Riverside near Vale Field. Classes: Mon-Thu (6:30-7:30am) & 7:45-12:30pm • Sign up: bewell.2009@gmail.com. Info: (780-593-8355)

CHESS Edmonton Chess Club and Society of Alberta Chess Knights (780-474-2318) • Learn to play chess; opportunities for all ages including classes, school programs and tournaments • rovingchess-nuts@shaw.ca

CIRCLE ALBERTA GATHERING Shaw Conference Centre • A 2-day roundtable bringing together Aboriginal communities, government & private sectors to facilitate relationship building and networking opportunities • Oct 24-25 • Tickets \$349 available at www.circlealberta.ca

CREATIVE DISSIDENT: A POLITICIAN'S STRUGGLE FOR PEACE Chapel, Augustana Campus, 4901 - 46 Ave, Camrose • with Hon. Douglas Roche, OC • Mon Oct 27 (7pm)

DESIGN IN A COLD CLIMATE LECTURE SERIES Grant MacEwan College, 5th Street Building, Room 5-142; www.madeinedmonton.org (780-663-3482) • Darryl Pearl of L'Oréal, Montreal • Oct 23 (7pm) • \$5 M.A.D.E. member / \$10 non-members

FAMILIES WHO CARE SOCIETY / COMMUNITY RALLY Provincial Legislature • Join us at this community rally to pressure the provincial government in addressing the growing demand for qualified staff to support families with children/adults with disabilities • Oct 28 (12-15pm)

FREE YOGA Lululemon Athletica, Kingsway security entrance 2 (780-471-1200) • All levels welcome, new styles each week, mats provided • Every Sun (6-7pm)

FROM CHAOS TO PEACE MEN'S GROUP Location TBA; (780-496-5886 or 780-944-5466) • A free 8 session work group for men who have experienced mental, emotional, verbal, physical, or financial abuse from their partner • Thu evenings; Oct 30 - Dec 18 (6:30-8:30pm) • Free

FUNDRAISING SUCCESS - WHERE TO START & HOW TO BUILD IT PCL Hall, 5th floor, Alberta College Campus, Grant MacEwan College, 10060 MacDonald Drive • Speaker: Anne

Kirkpatrick • Oct 25 (9am - 4pm) • \$31.50 adv (780-497-4780)

GETTING PUBLISHED: LITERARY MAGAZINES AND YOUR WRITING CAREER Strathcona Public Library, 8331 - 104 St • Ever wonder why it's important to submit your poems and stories to literary magazines? • Oct 27 (7pm) • \$5 • www.writersguild.ab.ca

GWYNNE DYER The Arden, 5 St. Anne St. St. Albert (780-459-1542) • The audience will be intimately seated on The Arden stage and have the opportunity to discuss hot topics with the respected journalist, includes champagne brunch or evening cocktails • **AFTER IRAQ** (11am) • **DUPLICATE WARS** (8pm) • Sun Oct 26 • \$50 / show • ticket-masters.ca (780-451-8000)

IMAGES ALBERTA CAMERA CLUB Pleasantview Community Hall, 10860-57 Ave (780-469-9776/780-452-6224/780-962-6561) • Featuring presentations, speakers, workshops, outings, and competitions. All levels of photographers welcome • Meet the 2nd and 4th Thu each month, Sept-May (8pm); www.imagesab.com

JITTERBUG SWING DANCE McKernan Hall, 11341-78 Ave (780-604-7572) • Come to the Sugar Foot Swing and dance swing, jive, charleston, and lindy hop all night long • Every Sat. night, Beginner lesson at 8pm, dance from 9pm-12am; info at dances@sugarwing.com

LAUGHTER OVER TEA: JANE AUSTEN AND CULINARY PEDAGOGY Edmonton Room, Stanley A. Milner Library • /Moderator: Natasha Duquette of Taylor University College, a recent visiting scholar at Jane Austen's home in Chawton. This will be Dr Duquette's last talk to our group before she takes up an academic appointment in California • Oct 25 (2-4pm) • Free

LOOKING GOOD, FEELING GOOD: SPORT, FITNESS AND THE BODY Art Gallery of Alberta (Kinsmen Square, 100, 10230 Jasper Ave (780-422-6223) • Join the AGA for a free lecture with Pirkko Markula, Ph.D. Professor, Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation • Oct 23 (7pm) • Free

MEDITATION • Gaden Samten Ling Tibetan Buddhist Meditation Society, 11403-101 St (780-479-0014) www.gaden-santerling.org; Kushok Lobzang Chomche, beginner Tue (7pm); intermediate Wed (7pm); advanced Sun (11am-1pm) • **Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual Organization**, 208, 10132-105 St (780-475-1060) www.bksw.org; Raja Yoga Meditation • **Monks and Buddhist practices** 10502-70 Ave, www.tamatasting.ca (780-633-6157) with Tibetan tradition Lama Ani Kunsang. Beginners welcome, instruction available; free; Wed (7pm)

NOBODY'S AN ISLAND 10303 - 65 Ave (780-967-8162) • Stuck in feeling Sad, Lonely, Depressed, Angry, Failure? This workshop offers you the opportunity to look at your situation from a perspective that can't be perceived of from your involved point of view. • Oct 29 (10am - 5:30pm) • \$99 / \$79 earlybird www.nobodysanisland.com

PERSPECTIVES ON LABOUR SHORTAGES EXPLORING THE EDUCATION-JOB GAP • 2008 Conference of the Work & Learning Network, University of Alberta and Co-sponsored by Center for the Study of Education & Work (OISE/UT) • Oct 24 (evening) • Oct 26 (noon) • Regular \$240 Student/retiree \$125 • www.worklearningnetwork.ca/2008conf/index.html

PROMOTING CULTURES OF PEACE IN A TROUBLED WORLD Lister Conference Centre, 116 St. & 87 Ave (780-413-6159) www.edinterfaithcentre.ca • An interfaith, interdisciplinary Perspective over two days with guest speakers, group discussions, Q&A, entertainment & refreshments • Keynote with Dr. Betty Reardon; Oct 30 (7pm) at Telus Centre, \$10 donation • Conference: Oct 31 (8am-5pm); \$60 single / \$100 couple / \$35 student, senior, member

RIISING SUN THEATRE WORKSHOP (TAKING NEW MEMBERS NOW) SKILLS: 10408-124 St (780-494-2203) • Edmonton's theatre of alternatively-abled actors. Weekly workshops for both new and current members. The new play will have a scenic western style and will be written with and for the group • Mon nights through Nov, (7-9 pm)

ST. ANDREW'S UNITED CHURCH QUILTING GROUP FALL QUILT SALE St. Andrew's United Church, 9915 - 148 St (780-452-4454) • Precious hand-made quilts and afghans and other comfort items for friends, family, and/or yourself. Proceeds are donated to charity • Nov 1 (1-4pm)

SWEET MISERY: A POISONED WORLD Steeps Tea Lounge College Plaza, 11116 - 82nd Ave • Part of the "Thoughtful Tuesday" film/documentary series: This film reveals one of the most pervasive, insidious forms of corporate negligence in the history of the industrial revolution - Aspartame! • Oct 28 (7pm) • Free; limited seating

SWING DANCE LESSONS Strathcona Hall, 10139-87 Ave. • Exciting, fun beginner dance lessons on jitterbug, jive, and lindy hop by Sugar Swing. 4-week series on Mondays or Wednesdays • Starting Oct 27 (7pm) • classes@sugarwing.com, (780-604-7572)

TELUS WORLD OF SCIENCE 11211-142 St (780-452-9100) • **SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY WEEK** A variety of enlightening presentations, guest speakers and hands-on activities in celebration of the best in science and innovation; Through Oct 25

avoid absorbing any scary, overwhelming data about the global economic crunch. Worrying about the big financial picture would not only be fruitless, it would also distract you from your main tasks, which are as follows: regard this time as an excellent prod to shed materialistic obsessions and live more humbly and creatively. Sublimate your buy-ological urges into biological urges. Stretch yourself to get into closer touch with your spiritual core.

CANCER (JUN 21 - JUL 22)

As world stock markets came crashing down, a different kind of global devastation received scant notice. The World Conservation Congress revealed that 25 per cent of the planet's mammal species and one out of eight birds are on close to extinction. We're not just talking about exotic animals in remote hideaways, but rabbits and deer and cardinals and turtles. As you meditate on how to reinvent yourself in the wake of the financial shifts, Cancerian, please hold a vigil in your heart for the endangered creatures. The two crises are related, after all. The greed to turn everything into a means of generating money has led humans to both despoil nature and risk the crazy gambles that have savaged the economy. The more you understand that, the better your intuition will be as you make personal decisions affecting your future relationship with money.

LEO (JUL 23 - AUG 22)

TV's *The Daily Show* did a mock biography of your fellow Leo, Barack Obama, poking fun at the adoration he inspires in millions of people around the world. Every time he speaks, said the narrator, "an angel has an orgasm." According to my analysis, you now have a scaled-down version of that power. You may not incite

TOASTMASTERS CLUBS • Chamber Toastmasters Club: Chamber of Commerce, 600, 9890 Jasper Ave (780-459-5206); Thu (8pm) • **MacEwan:** Grant MacEwan College, Rm 7-297E, 10700-104 Ave (780-633-3921); Fri (noon-1pm) • **Norcross Toastmasters Club:** Londonderry Public Library www.norcross.com; Wed (7-8:45pm) • **Norwood Toastmasters Club:** Kingsway Legion, 10425 Kingsway Avenue, (780-456-3934) www.norwoodtoastmasters.org; Thu (8-10pm) • **Power Speakers:** Grant MacEwan Centre for the Arts, Rm 437, 10045-156 St (780-453-0642); Wed (7-9pm) • **Presence:** Best Western Cedar Park Inn, 5118 Gateway Boulevard (780-457-0808); Wed (7-9pm) • **Chancellor:** Kingsway Rm, Millard Health Building, 131 Airport Rd (780-498-4808/474-1138) Thu (7-8:30pm) • **Upward Bound:** Rm 801 Norquest College 10215-106St, (780-498-4068 or 780-454-3720) adamark@telus.net; Wed (7-8:30pm)

TUESDAY TREATS Free invitation every Tuesday evening (7-9pm) Middle aged models (men and women) of all shapes and sizes are requested to help demonstrate beauty product benefits; beautiful-ou2008@gmail.com; (780-909-9355)

WOMEN IN BLACK In front of the Old Strathcona Farmers' Market • Silent vigil the 1st and 3rd Sat (10-11am) every month, stand in silence for a world without violence

WELCOME TO THE NEEL WORLD Civil Engineering Building (CEB) 325, www.week.usalberta.ca • Global issues film and speaker series • **SEOLA TRAIN:** Today, there are an estimated 250,000 North Korean refugees living underground in China. A group of multinational activists has taken it upon themselves to create an Underground escape route • Oct 29 (5-7pm)

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE SOUTHERN BAPTISTS? C014, Basement of Classroom Building, Augustana Campus, 4901 - 46 Ave, Camrose • With John Brunau • Wed Oct 23 (7pm)

WHAT'S AT STAKE IN THE U.S. ELECTIONS? Stanley Milner Library, Sir Winston Churchill Square • **LUNCH BY THE BOOKS:** A panel discussion about the U.S. election, featuring the insights of experts from the Dept. of Political Science and Institute for United States Policy Studies at the U of A. • Oct 23 (12:45 - 12:50pm) • Free

WHY WE ARE OBESSE - CANADIAN PUBLIC LECTURE (General Credit Hall in the Walter Macdonald Health Sciences Centre University of Alberta Hospital, east entrance on 112 Street between 95 and 96 Avenue) • Dr. Jeffrey Friedman will address the complex issues that are contributing to this growing epidemic • Oct 19 (7-8pm)

YOU NEVER BIKE ALONE Steeps Tea Lounge College Plaza, 11116 - 82nd Ave • Part of the "Thoughtful Tuesday" film/documentary series: This documentary examines how cyclists are building critical mass in Vancouver and changing the face of the city. It is the story of how a social movement grows and the people behind it • Oct 31 (7pm) • Free; limited seating

QUEER LISTINGS

AFFIRM SUNNYBROOK-RED DEER Sunnybrook United Church, Red Deer (403-347-6073) • Affirm welcome LGBTQ people and their friends, family, and allies meet the 2nd Tue (7pm) every month

BOOTS BAR AND LOUNGE 10242 106 St. www.bootsbar.ca (780-423-5014) • 2nd Thursday: Illusions Social Club • 3rd Wednesday: Edmonton O Society • 2nd Tuesday: Edmonton Rainbow Business Association • Every Friday: Philosophy Cafe • Friday and Saturday DJ SeXXy Sean 10-3 • Long Weekend Sundays feature the Stardust Lounge with Miss Bianca and Vanity Fair

BUDDY'S NITE CLUB 11725B Jasper Ave 780-489-7736) • Open nightly 9pm-3am, Fri 8pm-3pm • Sun: Rotating drag shows with Mz Bianca and Mz Vanity Fair in The Stardust Lounge and GoDiva and Donatella NEI in The GoDiva Show, DJ WestCoastBabyDaddy • Mon: Amateur strip contest with Mia Fellow, midnight, DJ WestCoastBabyDaddy • Tue: Free pool and tourney, DJ Arrowchaser • Wed: Hump day with DJ SeXXy Sean • Thu: Wet underwear contest with Mia Fellow, midnight, DJ WestCoastBabyDaddy • Fri: We made 'em famous! DJ Eddy Toonflash, come early to avoid lineup, no cover before 10pm • Sat: Undie night for men only, free pool and tourney, DJ Arrowchaser

EDMONTON PRIME TIMERS (EPT) Unitarian Church of Edmonton, 10804-119 St • A group of older gay men and their admirers who have common social interests meet the 2nd Sun (2:30pm) of most months for a social period, a short meeting and a guest speaker, discussion panel or a potluck supper. Special interest groups meet for other social activities throughout the month. email: edmontonptl@yahoo.ca, www.primetimerswww.org/edmonton

GLET SPORTS AND RECREATION www.gletrecreation.ca • Women's Drop-In Recreational Badminton: Oliver School Gym, 10227-118 St (780-465-3620); Wed (6-7:30pm) • Bootcamp, St. Alphonsus, 11624-81 St (780-48pm); bootcamp@teamedmonton.ca • Bowling: Gateway Lanes, 100 3414 Gateway Blvd, Sat (5-7pm); bowling@teamedmonton.ca • Swimming: Sun, Tue, Thur; running@teamedmonton.ca • Running: NAIT pool, 11762-106 St

Tue (8-9pm), Thu (7:30-8:30pm); swimming@teamedmonton.ca • Volleyball: 101 Armitage Way Academy, Municipal Airport Terminal just off Kingsway, Wed recreational (8-10pm); ncvolleyball@teamedmonton.ca; Thu intermediate; volleyball@teamedmonton.ca • YOGA (Hatha): Free Lion's Breath Yoga; every Sun (2-3:30pm); yoga@teamedmonton.ca

ILLUSIONS SOCIAL CLUB Boots, 10242-106 St (780-387-3343) • Crossdressing, transsexuals, friends and supporters meet 2nd Thu each month http://groups.yahoo.com/group/edmonton_illusions/

INSIDE/OUT U of A Campus • Campus-based organization for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-identified and queer (LGBTQ) faculty, graduate student, academic, straight allies and support staff • 3rd Thu every month (fall/winter terms). Speakers Series. Contact Kris (kjwells@ualberta.ca)

LIVING POSITIVE 404, 10408-124 St. www.edmlivingpositive.ca (1-877-975-9448/780-488-5768) • Providing confidential peer support to people living with HIV • Tue (7-9pm); Support group • Daily drop-in, peer counselling

MADELINE SAMAH FOUNDATION Faculté St. Jean, Rm 3-18 (780-490-7332) • Program for HIV-AIDS prevention, treatment and harm reduction in French, English and other African languages • 3rd and 4th Sat (9am-5pm) every month • Free (member/\$10 (membership) • Pre-register

MAKING WAVES SWIMMING CLUB www.gocubed.com/making-waves_edit • Recreational and competitive swimming with coaching, beginners encouraged to participate. Socializing after practices • Every Tue, Thu

PRIDE Pride Centre, 9540-111 Ave • A support group for parents and friends of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people • Meet the 1st Wed each month September-June (7-9pm); 1: Ruby 780-436-1998 (after 6pm); E.edmontonab@pridecanada.ca

PLAY NIGHT CLUB 10220-103 St. www.playnightclub.ca • Open Thu, Fri, Sat • The first bar for the queer community to open in a decade with DJs Alex Brown and Eddie Toonflash

PRIDE CENTRE OF EDMONTON 9540-111 Ave. www.pridecentre-edmonton.org (780-498-3234) • Open Tue-Fri 1-10pm, Sat 2-6:30pm • LGBT Seniors Drop-in: Meet every Tue/Thu (2-4pm) • CA: Meet every Thu (7pm) • Suit Up and Show Up: AA big book study group meet every Sat (noon) • Youth Understanding Youth: Youth up to 25 years, support and social group meet every Sat (7-9pm); yoy@shaw.ca • Womanspace: Board meeting 1st Sun each month (10:30am-12:30pm) • Trans Education/Support Group: Meet the 1st and 3rd Sun (2-4pm) of each month; www.albertatrans.org • Men Talking with Pride: Meet every Sun (7pm); facilitator: Rob Wells robwells@804hotmail.com • HIV Support Group: Meet the 2nd Mon of each month (7pm) • Transgender, Transsexual, Intersex and Questioning (TTQ) Alliance: Support meeting the 2nd Tue each month (7:30pm) • Transgender, Transsexual, Intersex and Questioning, Education, advocacy and support for men, women and youth; PFLAG Edmonton: Meet the 1st Wed each month (7pm) • Free short-term, isolation-focused drop-in counselling, every Wed (7-10pm) • YouthSpace: drop-in for LGBTQ for youth up to 25, Tue-Sat (3-7pm)

PRISM BAR 10524 - 101 Street (780-990-0038) • Dyle to Dive Kick-Off Party: Come meet the dykes as they select their drag mentors in preparation for the most amazing transformation; Oct 11 • Drag King Contest; Oct 17

ROBERTSON-WESLEY UNITED CHURCH 10298-123 St (780-482-1587) www.rwuc.org • Soul OUTing: an LGBT-focused alternative worship • 3rd Sun every month (7pm); worship Sun (10:30am); people of all sexual orientations welcome. A LGBT monthly book club and a bi-monthly film night. Call for more info or email jreynolds@rwuc.org

ROBTS BAR AND LOUNGE 10242 - 106 St. www.pridecentre-edmonton.org (780-488-3234) • **FUNDRAISER AND SILENT AUCTION:** Raising money for the not for profit Pride centre of Edmonton with talent show • Oct 24 (9pm) • Free / donation

ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH 11526-76 Ave (780-436-1555) • People of all sexual orientations are welcome • Every Sun (10am worship)

WOMANSPACE www.womanspace.ca, womanspace@gmail.com (780 482 1794) • A Non-profit lesbian social organization for Edmonton and surrounding area. Organized monthly activities from dances, games nites, golf tournament, etc. Monthly newsletter and reduced rates included with membership. Confidentiality assured.

WOODY'S 11723 Jasper Ave (780-488-6557) • Open Daily (noon) • Sat-Tue Karaoke with Tizzy and Patrick • Sat-Sun Pool Tournaments

SPECIAL EVENTS

THE ALEXANDER BROTHERS 50TH ANNIVERSARY CONCERT Edmonton Scottish Society 3105 - 101 St (780-489-8028 or 780-436-2200) • The Alexander Brothers are one of Scotland's longest per-

forming acts of traditional Scottish music! • Oct 23 • \$30

ANIMU MULTICULTURAL ASSOCIATION FOR PERFORMING ARTS MULTICULTURAL NIGHT Royal Alberta Museum 12845-102nd Ave • Colorful dances & music from around the world with the participation of Edmonton Beijing Opera Association; Wozeo Africa Music & Dance Theatre, Gayagueni, Sonora Tropical, Folk Dances of Fujair and Rajasthan • Oct 27 (7pm) • \$17 / \$9 children; TIX on the Square

BEHIND THE SCENES CLIPPING OF MACAGGART ART COLLECTION Gallery A: TELUS Centre on the University of Alberta Campus in Edmonton, 87 Ave - 111 St (780-492-5834); museum@ualberta.ca • Did you ever want to go behind-the-scenes at the museum? Don't miss your chance, as the University of Alberta Museums open the doors to the storage and research facilities of the Macaggart Art Collection • Guided tours Oct 24 & 25 (noon)

CANDLELIGHT TOURS & TREATS Multicultural Heritage Centre, 5411-51 St Story Plan (780-963-2777) • An event for children aged 4-12, their families and the young-at-heart. Mask making, spooly tour, storytelling, tarot card readings, ghost patrol, snacks and more! • Oct 24 & 31 (7-10pm)

EDMONTON GHOST TOURS Walterdale Playhouse, 10322 - 83 Ave; www.edmontonghosttours.com (780-289-2005) • A Ghostly Walk through Old Strathcona • Through Oct 30 Mon-Thu nights ONLY (7pm) • \$5 / person

HARVEST BLUES DINNER AND DANCE The Old Timer's Cabin, 9430 - 99 St • This event promises to be an evening of fabulous food and music with guest artists including Kenny "Blues Boss" Wythe from Vancouver and Peter Schmidt from Toronto. Hosted by The Matt Walker Band • Sat Oct 25 (6:30pm) • \$50 at Dixie on the Square

LET'S GO BATTY! The Devonian Botanic Garden Hwy 50, 15 minutes from WEM • Come in your ghoulish costumes to the Devonian Botanic Garden for a truly spooky afternoon. Families will get the chance to carve pumpkins, go trick-or-treating, make crafts and take a stroll through our haunted greenhouses. Refreshments and games will be available as well. • Oct 28 (12:30-3:30pm) • \$25 / family

NORTH OF NOWHERE EXPO Various venues including ArtHub, Happy Harbor Comics, Naked Cyber Cafe and more TBA. www.edmontonsmallpress.org • A multidisciplinary festival of independent media & underground art. Film, visual art, sculptures & more. Feature exhibitions by Anna Banana and Lids Shafstam; featuring the Beshive Collective and educational documentaries; our 2nd Annual Pinwheels for Peace; plus a 10th Anniversary Retrospective of ESPA's first decade of rabble-rousing (hosted by ArtsHub), featuring a remarkable exhibition of the best small press, zines, mail art, artspunks, political prints and underground art from our permanent collection • Through Oct 31

NORTHERN LIGHTS CLASSIC BALLROOM DANCE COMPETITION Polish Hall, 10360 - 104 St • Top amateur competitors from across Western Canada showcase competitive ballroom dancing. • Nov 1 & 2 • \$15 for Day (Sat 9am-4pm; Sun 10am-4pm); \$35-\$50 for Sat Evening (6:30-12am) (Saturday evening ticket includes entry to Saturday daytime events)

ONJAS - NORTH BRITS SOUTH Multiple locations • **Terrence Raga-Nala** boasts its 25th year with internationally renowned dynamic dance duo Nungpane and Rajendra from Bangalore, India, performing a Bharatanatyam and Kathak production • **PERFORMANCE:** Myer Horowitz Theatre, Students Union Building, University of Alberta; Sat Nov 1 (7:30pm) • **WORKSHOP:** Old Strathcona Performing Arts Centre, 8426 Gateway Boulevard; Sun Nov 2 (2-4pm)

OCTOBERFEST Amber's Brewing Company 9926-78 Ave (780-637-5829) • Put on your lederhosen, unleash your inner oompah and celebrate Oktoberfest! Mercury Opera's inaugural fall fundraiser bash. • Oct 24 • \$25 adv

RUSSIAN MASQUERADE PARTY Delmar Community Hall, 9709 - 182 St (780-240-5885) • Dinner, dance, entertainment • Nov 1 (6pm-1am) • \$40

SACRED MUSIC FESTIVAL Francis Winspear Centre for Music (780-428-1414) www.winspearcentre.com • The Chorus (Concordia Concert Choir, Concordia Community Chorus and Sine Nomine) will be supported by the Concordia Symphony Orchestra, Jubilo! Belles of Concordia, featuring organist Rev. Nicole Marweller and soloist Nola Shantz; Guest conductor Dr. Larry Nickel • Oct 26 (7:30pm) • \$15 / \$12 students

TOGETHER...THE IMPOSSIBLE! Hudson Hotel Edmonton South • NABIS' 25th Anniversary GALA is one of a series of events to spotlight NABIS' anniversary and the impact of brain injury on the wider community • Oct 25 (6pm)

VOICES FOR HOSPICE Francis Winspear Centre for Music (780-428-1414); www.winspearcentre.com • Benefit concert & art auction featuring Canadian Idol Finalists, Martin Kerr & Oliver Probst, Proco, ASANI, Kita No Teiko, Samantha King & Kaperush Ukrainian Dance Association. Supporting Filmmore Hospice, providing support to families with life threatening illness www.filmmorehospice.ca • Oct 24; Auction (8pm); Concert (7pm) • \$45 / \$25 students/seniors

ZODIAC
FREE
WILL
ASTROLOGY
ROB BREZSNY
freewill@vuwweekly.com

ARIES (MAR 21 - APR 19)

My home country of America spends an obscene fortune on its armed forces—as much as do all the other nations of the world combined. In fact, we are by far the most weaponized empire in the history of the world, with 761 military bases in over 100 countries. If our military expenditures were cut down to a more reasonable size—say the same as China's—we'd have a trillion-dollar bonus to deal with the financial infection that erupted here and sent toxic ripples throughout the world. Keeping that in mind as a metaphor, Aries, make this your hypothesis: by reducing the hostility, combativeness and judgmental ire that you personally generate, you'll be far more likely to navigate your way toward prosperity.

TAURUS (APR 20 - MAY 20)

The skies now feature a rare opposition between Saturn and Uranus. Since Saturn symbolizes the past and Uranus the future, we might expect there to be a show-down between what has been and what will be, not only on a collective level but also in our personal realms. In what areas of your life do you think that will materialize, Taurus? Identify those hotspots, then get to work coordinating synergistic interactions between the seemingly contrary forces.

GEMINI (MAY 21 - JUN 20)

Please promise me that for the next month, you will

the same intensity of pleasure in the heavenly hosts, but you could potentially unleash eruptions of raw enthusiasm in numerous humans. I suggest that like Obama, you channel it in service to a cause beyond your own selfish interests.

VIRGO (AUG 23 - SEP 22)

When the planet

Let down down south

QUEERMONTON

TAMARA GORZALKA
tam@vuwweekly.com

I planned my trip to California with a mission in mind: I wanted to experience as much American gay culture as possible. As someone who's favourite gay clubs are in Edmonton and Saskatoon, I always wonder about people who complain about the bars here. The idea is that other, bigger cities have a much better nightclub scene compared to ours here on the Prairies, and I wanted to see for myself if that was true.

Since I was going to be spending a lot of time in San Francisco and Los Angeles—the supposed epicentre of gay life in North America—now seemed as good a time as any to dip my feet into international gay waters.

I learned a couple things on my rainbow mystery tour. One is that lesbians

have little to no place in the Californian bar scene. The second is that old chestnut, "Don't believe the hype."

It's not that I was disappointed in San Francisco, I just expected a little something more. I was operating under the incorrect assumption that places like LA and Frisco would have more than one lesbian bar each. Even just a few mixed clubs or something. But no, the ladies who like ladies tend to hide away in the Golden State.

Perhaps places like San Francisco are just so gay that they negate the need for queer bars. That's a fine assumption if not for that fact that it's got 30 or 40 clubs for gay males in operation. My travelling companion, who lives in Los Angeles, suggested that lesbians don't go out as much. She might be right, but it's hard to believe that Canadian girls really party that much more than Californian ones.

They have way more gay nights than clubs themselves. That means a night for

gay men or lesbians once a week at a normally straight club. They also have lesbian and drag nights at gay bars. That's great if you aren't under time constraints, but these nights all seemed to happen at times when I was in a different city.

There's one lesbian bar in San Francisco. Seriously, one. It was pretty fun, but that had way more to do with the clientele than anything the bar had to offer. The Lexington Club is, like every other alcohol establishment I saw in the city, akin to your average neighbourhood dive bar. Every place was pretty much the size of Prism, and they all had the same layout: a few tables down one side, the bar counter on the other and no dance floor in sight. Maybe a jukebox if you were lucky.

One of the more bizarre turns our trip took was wandering into the Bench and Bar. An internet write-up sent us there, but it didn't mention it's exclusively male clientele. The place was huge, with 500 Hispanic men dancing to a Latin band. Have you ever seen a bunch of Latino cowboys grinding and making out with each other? I have.

THERE WAS ONLY one place that was anything special: the Here Lounge in West Hollywood. We went on its lesbian night, called Heat, and found an interesting mix of ages and ethnicities. The club is brand new and very well laid out, with a long hallway with cushioned rooms, a big bar area surrounded by a dance floor and a lovely patio with more tables and space than all the other areas inside. It felt like an LA bar, and it was the only one that made much of an impression to me.

It's unfortunate that all the gems, gay or straight, that a city holds are usually hidden away from tourists. After all, the gay travel market may be huge, but none of the guides I looked at were much help. They seemed aimed at the 30-something gay males with high disposable incomes, offering up magnificent hotels that charged half my monthly income for one night's stay.

If I wanted a museum and galleries, the gay guides had many of those to suggest. Now, I do love both those things, but that wasn't the intention of this trip. I was there for gay history and culture. It took far too much time digging around to

find any mention of the small, queer museum San Francisco has hidden away.

Once I found it, the museum was probably the highlight of my trip to San Fran. The exhibit space is three floors up in an office building that holds other museums and galleries. When I visited they were showing exhibits on gays in the military and one about the 25 years of the Folsom Street Fair.

San Francisco does hold one spot that every gay person needs to visit just once. Harvey Milk Plaza is the place where 40 000 people gathered on the night of Milk's assassination. Beautiful photos of him adorn a fence and a metal plaque details his life. A huge pride flag waves high. Standing there, I had something akin to a religious experience, or what I imagine those to be.

I guess the grass will always be more rainbow-coloured on the other side to some people, but from where I stand it's pretty vibrant over here. Maybe it's time we start exploring our own communities first before pining for things beyond our borders. Besides, drinks in American gay bars are really expensive. ▽

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Gallery at Milner call for submissions
Deadline: Oct. 10. More info: 780-496-7030

The Works Festival—Calls to Enter • Churchill Square 2009 Artisan Market and Food Street Vendors. Reduced rates if you apply by Feb. 15, 2009. Contact dawn@theworks.ab.ca for more info. **Deadline: Apr. 15, 2009 • Churchill Square 2009 Street Stage.** **Deadline: Feb. 15, 2009 • 2011 exhibit Deadline: Aug. 25, 2009 • 2nd Annual Chalk Art Contest.** Prizes are awarded on Canada Day, base your entry on the 2009 Festival theme HEAT! **Deadline: June 1, 2009 • 2nd Annual Smaller than a Breadbox.** Base your entry on the 2009 Festival theme HEAT! **Deadline: May 1, 2009 • Download applications at www.theworks.ab.ca**

Festival organizations in Northern Alberta (north of Highway 16 corridor) are encouraged to apply for the TransAlta Festival City Mentorship/Partnership Grant. Info and application forms available from the Edmonton Arts Council website
www.edmontonarts.ab.ca or call Sally Kim at the Edmonton Arts Council 780-424-2787, ext 226

Steeps—Old Glenora: for open mic—Spoken word First Thursday every month. Contact Adam Snider to sign up adam.snider@gmail.com

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VOLUNTEER

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Special needs "Learn to Bike" courses at Gold Bar Park are looking for volunteer experienced cyclists to help with this course. Thu evenings **until Oct. 16.** John at jbcollier@shaw.ca

Red Cross's Humanitarian Issues Program: need volunteers to help promote humanitarian issues to the Edmonton Community. We are hoping to expand our youth team (12-24 yrs old). Contact Laura Keegan at laura.keegan@redcross.ca

The CRC is seeking energetic, caring, committed volunteers to become Prevention Educators for its RespectED: Violence and Abuse Prevention Program. Canadian Red Cross/RespectED Training Program begins fall 2008. www.redcross.ca/cnar, Education Coordinator: 780.702.4158 / E: edmonton.respected@redcross.ca

Brain Neurobiology Research Program at U of A Hospital is seeking healthy and depressed subjects (not currently taking antidepressants) for various studies. Reimbursement for expenses provided. Call 407-3221 (depressed only), 407-3906 (healthy or depressed), or 407-3775 (female healthy or depressed, including pregnant and just delivered) for more information

Tandem Captains—Cycling with the Blind Tandem Captains required. Please contact John Collier at 433-1270

Dr.'s Appointment Buddy—Accompany new refugee immigrants to their medical appointments to give support and assist with paperwork. Thu, 10:30am-2:30pm. Transportation not required. Leslie 780-432-1137, ext 357

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Cougar den

ADVICE **ALT.SEX.COLUMN**
ANDREA HEMERSON
altsex@altsexcolumn.com

DEAR ANDREA,
I appreciated your response to "Older and Wiser?" ("Sunrise, Sunset," Sep 24 - Oct 1, 2008), the late-20s woman who is planning marriage and kids with her late-50s boyfriend.

Fourteen years ago, when I was 26, I met my husband, who was then 58. We've stayed together through thick and thin and we love each other enormously. It has pained me over the past decade to realize that, even when the woman in question has her own accomplishments and is not a "bimbo," even when the man in question is appealing and interesting—still the nasty stereotypes abound.

British comedian Graham Norton, for instance, refers to Catherine Zeta Jones as "that gold-digging Welsh whore."

I find that otherwise thoughtful women whom I meet, acting on a mixture of feminism, anger and what I infer to be unacknowledged personal pain or fear, seem too willing to continue such stereotypes, and I hesitate to open up to women whom I would otherwise think of as potential friends. I have hoped that as increasingly empowered women realize that they can date younger men if they choose, the rage over the double-standard and the fear of abandonment and dwindling romantic options will begin to fade.

Then SNL comes along with, among other bits that belittle older women, their despicable new "Cougar Den" skit, mocking sexually-active older women as ridiculous and disgusting. Fuck you, SNL! These mean-spirited portrayals are

destructive. I've attempted to convey this message through other venues and have been ignored. I remember a few years ago you wrote that the only regrettable mixed union between adults is "the always unfortunate nice person/asshole combo"—so maybe you'll see my point and print this. LOVE. LOVE MY OLDER SPOUSE

DEAR LOVE:

Ha, that's a pretty good line. Thanks for remembering it.

I hadn't even thought about SNL in years until the recent gratifying return of Tina Fey, but now that you mention it (you didn't), I have conceived a visceral loathing for Sarah Palin so intense that I couldn't even watch the debate for fear of feeling too sick to cook dinner. And yet I've still managed to be offended, feministically-speaking, by some of the endless harping on her supposed babe-itude. Can we not leave her legs and Senator Clinton's, which have been judged unacceptably stumpy, and everyone else's out of the equation and judge the candidates on their merits? Governor Palin, for instance, doesn't have any. We win!

As for "cougars," I have puzzled over the sudden emergence of the stereotype and the unquestioned assumption that the women to whom it is applied deserve ridicule. After a spate of popular-media articles in the '90s about older women and their younger men I suppose some degree of backlash was inevitable. Still, I, like you, am nonplussed by the degree of venom spit at any woman of a certain age who dares not only to date above her age-determined station but to do anything for fun at all beyond book club, knitting and golf.

Don't you think, though, that the reaction of some older women to a young one seen with a man old enough to be the first woman's first husband is understandable? We can claim the right to date younger men all we like, but who's to say most younger men will be interested? And there are still legions of old coots advertising for "fit, slender" young things in the personals. There is still a media-driven double standard keeping George Clooney in the "sexy lead" seat while Glenn Close and Cybill Shepherd have to play doughty moms and, yes, cougars. These forces are still powerful

enough to make your fond wish for a time when older women will inevitably gaze upon your union with one of their own with bland approval still a bit of a pipe dream. As long as older women with a sex drive and indeed any juice at all left in them are laughed and pointed at, some will still look at a young woman who scoops up one of the few available men in their bracket as whatever the opposite of a cougar might be. Minx. Bitch. Gold-digging (Welsh) whore. Sad, and frustrating, but human.

Incidentally, I was curious about the origin of "cougar" in this context and found an article dating it to the founding in 1999 of Cougardate, an online dating site. A book, *Cougar: A Guide for Older Women Dating Younger Men*, by Valerie Gibson, came along in 2001. As you can see, these were guides for women, so the term, even with its "rapacious animal" connotations, wasn't even meant pejoratively. The nastiness accrued to it gradually, it seems, and inevitably. If it's about women actually wanting sex, that's gonna happen.

OK, Now I'm mad too.

LOVE. ANDREA

Instructor Support Aide—Assist Health Care Aide Training instructors in a program for immigrant women to present course materials, and students. 4hrs/wk, 8am-noon, or 1-4pm, Mon-Fri, Northeast location. Leslie 780-432-1137, ext 357

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Canadian Mental Health Association—Edmonton Region Board Recruitment. For info visit www.cmha-edmonton.ab.ca, click on Volunteer, Contact Abigail Parrish-Craig at grammabby@shaw.ca

E.C.A.W.A.R. (EDMONTON COALITION AGAINST WAR AND RACISM) Volunteers welcome. www.wage-peace.com for info/contacts, 780-988-2713

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A call for volunteers - Action for Healthy Communities: Questions about AHC philosophy & programs? 944-4687 Visit: www.a4hc.ca

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Exposure: Edmonton's Queer Arts and Culture Festival seeks steering committee volunteers. Visit www.exposurefestival.ca

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SERVICES

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Canadian Mental Health Association, www.cmha-edmonton.ab.ca Education Program is pleased to offer workshops to give you the skills to intervene with people who may be at risk for suicide. Follow the links to ASIST or call 414-6300

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